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PEQUINILLO.

CHAPTER I.

I AM going to follow the advice given by the witty Count Antoine Hamilton, although it will lay me under the necessity of doing a thing that I abominate: namely, of quoting from the French. "*Mon ami Belier*," he says, "*toujours commencez par le commencement*." Now, one cannot very well get nearer to the beginning of a man's life, than introducing him as a baby—although authorities have differed even upon this subject.

In a nice, clean-looking cottage, containing four good rooms, to say nothing of a kitchen and sundry appendages, which were built out behind—or of a carpenter's shop at the side, from which issued an exceedingly eternal (I beg pardon) sound of a saw playing in the jaws of a piece of wood, which might have pinioned a dozen Milos—sat an old woman.

The old woman had society of a certain sort, however ; for, beside the cat, which sat on the window-sill, enjoying some bright, warm rays of early sunshine, and the dog, which stood in the open door-way, with his legs as stiff as pokers, the good lady had another companion, stretched out at length upon her knee, dressed in exceedingly long long-clothes, and with a smart cap upon his head, edged with at least three rows of very passable Valenciennes lace.

I will not pause here to describe, minutely, the beauties of my hero's face, or the graces of his form. Or, if it be neces-

sary to satisfy a very exacting reader, I may easily sketch him out, by saying that his eyes were round, and his mouth was round, and his nose was round, and his head was round; and, do what they could, to make it look long and slippery, his body, as far as it could be seen under the clothes, was as round as all the rest.

Now, the old woman declared that the child was the very model of his father; and his father was a young man of nearly six feet high. It must be admitted that the old lady's eyes were none of the clearest; and, at the very moment when she sits before us, with the baby on her lap, she has got on her nose a pair of spectacles, which are none of the clearest either. However, she is engaged in acting up to her catechism, and "doing her duty in that state of life unto which it has pleased God to call her."

The way she did this was as follows. She stared in the child's face, through the

great, round spectacles ; and, as long as it stared back again, goggling at her with its large, young eyes, as if it wondered what the deuce she could be, she continued to jog it up and down with one foot, in a way that would have driven any Christian mad.

The baby had not yet been baptised. When it left off staring, made its face square instead of round, and began to shout—which occasionally it did most lustily—she threw its head over her shoulder, with the face leaning backwards, and thumped it vehemently on the back, while it sucked the collar of her gown. This process seemed to have an instantaneous effect in quieting it. It was better even than the ticking of the clock, which, with a brass face engraved to represent the sun—I mean the sun of clock-makers, with eyes, nose, and mouth, and the pivot of the hands in the middle of the nose—stood behind the door, in a tall japanned case. That which seemed to interest the infant most, how-

ever, was the noise of the saw, although it might be said to be, like Hamlet, "to the manner born;" and, especially when the teethed instrument came suddenly upon any hard knot in the wood, and screamed, like a lawyer in purgatory, the child seemed infinitely delighted, raised up its large eyes in the direction of the sound—its head it could not yet raise—and, to use the old lady's term, "took a world of notice."

All this proved that the babe must have passed some weeks in this mortal world; but yet, it was under the month; for, like all first children, it was exceedingly precocious; and, if we believe either the mother or the nurse, would have puzzled Sir Isaac Newton himself—as well it might; but not in their sense.

"Well, I do declare she is very long!" said the old woman to herself, after having juggled, and stared, and patted, successively and in vain, over and over again. "She mought ha' dressed herself a dozen

times before now, to come down for the first time, with such a fine boy as this, and he a' starving."

The child certainly did not look as if it were starving at all, although it thought fit to cry for the gratification of that propensity which babies and leeches have in common. The fact is, the old lady was impatient, with just the same sort of impatience as the child's; for she was accustomed to allow herself each day, about half-past eleven o'clock, some fluid out of a long-necked bottle, as a sort of whet to the dinner, which came at twelve; and it now only wanted a quarter to noon.

At length, however, she was relieved. With a slow, and somewhat faltering step, came down from the first floor, a pale but very pretty creature, of hardly two-and-twenty years. Her oldest friends could with difficulty have recognised in her, the gay, plump, blithsome girl of a twelve-month before; and yet she looked as happy as a queen—a great deal happier, indeed

—although there be one in the world, who we hope is as happy in all her feelings as she is in all her acts.

The door in which the dog stood, was open, as we have said, and as soon as he heard his mistress's step, he turned round, brought his great black nose close up to her hand, wagged his tail, and then trotted out into the street.

Every one knows the effect of the first fresh air upon a person just recovering from severe sickness, and long confined to one room. The wind from the door, soft and gentle as it was, seemed to make a sensation of faintness come over the young mother, and she sank quietly into a seat. The old woman gave her the child upon her lap, however; and then she felt quite happy and strong again.

“You had better have some of the drops, my dear,” said the old woman. “The doctor said you were to take them three times a day, after the fever left you.” And away she went up-stairs, to fetch drops of

some kind; but which was the bottle she looked for first, I will not take upon me to say.

She had hardly closed the door, and the young mother had not been down two minutes, when the noise of the sawing suddenly ceased, and a tall, good-looking man of about thirty, with a bare head and curly hair, came quickly in, put his arm round the pretty creature's neck, and gave her a kiss, saying,

“Ah, Emma, my dear, I am glad to see you down again, with all my heart.”

He was evidently her husband; but whether it was by an intuitive and sympathetic knowledge that he had discovered his wife's coming down, and had left off his work a quarter of an hour before the time, to go and greet her, or whether the dog had run round and told him, I really cannot say. Certain it is, that he and the dog came in together.

“Don't sit with the door open, my dear,” he continued, closing it carefully; “this day fortnight, when you were so bad

with the fever, I never thought to see you sitting there again ; and I don't want to have you laid up, after having gone through all so bravely."

"This is reward enough for all, Hal," replied his wife, looking down at the baby, who was very pleasantly employed by this time, and as still as a mouse. "But you look grave and tired, Hal ; and, I think, have been working too much since I have not been able to tease you to leave off. I have heard the plane and the saw going all day, and part of the night, too, sometimes."

"If I had known that, my love, you should not have heard it," replied Hal, even more gravely than before ; "but you know, Emma, there are always some vexations in life ; and Kit Markus has left me, hang him ! He's as good a hand as any I know, and the cleverest, strongest, most active fellow within a hundred miles ; but the wandering spirit has come upon him again ; and Joe Martin, though a steady, hard-

working, good fellow, cannot get through all that we have to do, without my working very hard to help him."

"Oh, but you'll soon get another journeyman, Hal," said his wife, "when work is not so plenty.—My poppet! How well he looks, Hal! The old woman tells me you fed him yourself when I was so ill."

"Yes, because I was afraid she would give him gin," said the husband, almost bitterly.

But, as husbands of first wives, and fathers of first children, always quarrel with the nurses, it is not worth while here to enquire what grounds there were for his suspicions. Suffice it, that the old woman descended again, bringing a glass of medicine in her hand, and an alcoholic smell about her mouth, which caused both the husband and wife to make wry faces.

Very soon after, a tidy servant girl, with bare arms, very red at the back, came in, and laid a small table, with clean linen, and knives and forks. A pepper-caster, and a

salt-cellar, and a mustard-pot, and a vinegar-cruet, with a cork in it, were set down upon the table; and when a dish of meat and some vegetables had been brought in, husband and wife and monthly-nurse sat down to dinner, the latter holding the baby on her knee, and eating her food principally with the aid of one hand.

The conversation was all about the christening. Of what else, indeed, could it be? But the important point, which so desperately puzzled the learned and ingenious Mr. Shandy, puzzled the unlearned and not very argumentative Henry Ludlow and his wife Emma quite as much; so that the whole meal had passed before they had fixed upon the Christian name to be bestowed upon their first-born. The wife stood out stoutly for "Hal;" but the husband seemed ambitious in Christian names; and—with that sort of perverse spirit which makes some people hate anything that is tied to them for life—he abominated his own name, resisting

Hal, or Henry, or anything approaching to it, as resolutely as might be, without unkindness.

"I'll tell you what, my dear," he said, as he rose, at length, to resume his work, "you know the Squire has promised to be god-father, and it will be but civil to ask what is *his* fancy about a name. So at six o'clock I'll clean myself, and go up and speak with him about it, and we'll hear what he says."

"Well, I love the name of Hal," said his young wife, in a tone which implied both tenderness and stoutness.

Her husband kissed her cheek, answering with a smile,

"*I* don't love it half so well as Emma; and we can't call him that, you know, my dear."

She told him to go along, for a foolish fellow, but laughed, notwithstanding; and, at the hour named, her husband dressed himself in his best clothes, and went away over the fields, upon his important journey.

As the distance he had to travel was rather more than two miles, it was eight o'clock when he returned ; but his wife had not yet gone to bed, and the consultation recommenced. It was short, however, and far more satisfactory than before. The squire had proposed Julian, the husband said ; but left it entirely to themselves.

Mrs. Ludlow thought that Julian was a very pretty name. It tickled her ear and her fancy ; and, as she had never heard of Julian the Apostate, or Count Julian, or any of the naughty men who have carried that name about with them in history, Mr. Shandy's prejudices, if she had shared them, would not have affected her in this instance. Still, though she was a sweet, gentle little creature, a spice of woman's fondness for her own way hung about her ; and even in giving her consent to the name of Julian, she added, with a sigh, that she loved the name of Henry, nevertheless.

A compromise, however, was easily effected. There is no reason, as every Portuguese knows, why a child, or a man either, should not have a hundred Christian names if he pleases ; and it was decided in the end that the little boy should be called Julian Henry, and that the christening should be that day week, the squire having promised to be present in person.

What has all this to do with the history ? An immense deal, dearly beloved, if you will but wait a little.

CHAPTER II.

IN a beautiful part of that beautiful county called Buckingham (“which may be freely translated from its pure Anglo Saxon—the dwelling-place of the beech trees”) there was a park of considerable extent, and much picturesque loveliness. It had all those accessories which render the park of an English gentleman one of the most charming places for residence in the world. It had wood, it had water, it had hill, it had dale, it had gentle grassy lawns, it had fern-covered uplands, it had deep and shady groves, it had clumps of majestic trees, it had solitary hawthorns,

scenting the vernal air. The fair stream of the Thames, neither in its splendid width, nor in its gentle littleness, but a good broad river, as yet unpolluted by the filth of cities, gave the pleasant aspect of running water ; a small lake, in another spot, reflected the heavens above, and the trees around, and the whole scene had cultivation as well as wildness.

About the middle of the park, and about the middle of the rise from the bank of the river to the summit of the hills behind, was placed the mansion—a comfortable English dwelling, built some time in the eighteenth century, without the slightest pretension to architectural perfection, but with a steady regard to the convenience of the inhabitants. There was nothing in the least degree interesting about it—nothing either beautiful, picturesque, or romantic ; and yet, whichever way you gazed at it from the country around, it presented an imposing look, and had a pleasant aspect. This was especially the case in a glimpse

which one had of it from the road to Oxford, where it was beheld standing forth upon its little space of open green—the flower-garden in which could not be seen—and flanked on either side with a deep grove of tall trees, through which, extending from the back of the building, might be perceived a long avenue leading up the hill.

The interior of the house was as comfortable as it could be. There was no splendour, no ostentation. Not a gaudy colour appeared anywhere, except in the Turkey carpets. No gilding was seen, except here and there, on a very light moulding, or on the massive picture-frames, where it was hardly noticed—at least, by the eye of taste. There was a large, marble-paved entrance hall : a large marble-paved vestibule : a large, marble flight of stairs, with old oak balustrades, and a broad oak rail. On the right of the vestibule were the dining-room, the breakfast-room, and the kitchen offices. On the left, a music-room, a spacious

drawing-room, a smaller drawing-room, a magistrate's-room, and the library. Of these, the only two of very great extent, were the drawing-room and the library.

All the rest were of moderate size, though not small ; but very comfortable. The library itself, in point of proportion, was the finest room in the house. Two sides, and the piers of the two others, from the floor to the ceiling, were covered with book-cases, loaded with books. The indefatigable labors of many a year, and many a mind, had furnished that room well. It would have been impossible, even for the giant described, I believe by Pliny, who was eleven Roman feet in height, to have reached the volumes on the top shelves; and the founder of the library, disdaining the pitiful contrivance of a moveable ladder, had run a light gallery, of hammered iron-work, round the whole of the upper part of the room. This was reached by a sort of columnar staircase of the same materials, in which, by the way—for I recollect it

well—one felt very much like a bird in a cage. There were plenty of tables, plenty of recesses for drawings and maps, plenty of arm-chairs, and ink-stands, foot-stools, and paper-weights—plenty, in short, of those conveniences which could make a studious occupant perfectly at his ease. But all this plenty had been accumulated by the preceding possessor ; for the present owner of the property, though by no means averse to his ease when he found it, was not one to study it so profoundly.

He sits there in the arm-chair, with a book before him, and a black velvet cap, of no shape at all, covering his high, bald head, and a considerable portion of his fine, broad forehead.

I do not think that the tailor makes the man—as is so generally supposed. A gentleman can exist in an ill-cut coat. I have even seen a very bad piece of broad-cloth on a man who occasionally dignified the ermine, and a bad hat on brows familiar with the coronet. But, occasionally, there

is a sort of harmony between the man and his dress, which is worthy of remark when we meet with it. Such was the case in the present instance; and the Squire, as he was called in the neighbourhood, was dressed as befitted him at that hour of the day. Let it be remembered, however, in the first place, that his garments belonged to the time in which he lived—somewhat anterior to the period in which I am now writing. He wore a black coat, black knee-breeches, and black silk stockings, with a white waistcoat, and a white cravat. Powder, too, he wore; though powder had, generally, gone out of fashion, and he had dropped a good number of the appendages of his early days. But the powder had not flown off with the pig-tail.

His age might be somewhere between fifty and sixty; certainly less than the latter number of years, and probably more than the former. Whatever it was, his complexion was so good, his skin so soft and delicate, his teeth so fine, and his face

so unwrinkled, that he would have appeared much less than his age, had it not been for a certain staid, elderly cut about his clothes, his powdered hair, his bald or velvet-covered head, and—for there is always an “and” in everything, even unto the end of the world, and then, I trust, also—and a certain knitting of the brow, from a habit of thought and consideration, which gave a somewhat aged, and likewise a somewhat stern, look to a countenance otherwise youthful and benevolent. The features were finely cut, regular, and handsome ; the eyes brown, and the nose and mouth delicate ; though the chin was strongly marked. The figure, too, was fine and commanding, with some grace, but more of severe simplicity, in all its attitudes.

Such was the Squire (as his neighbours of the village called him) in his evening costume. In the morning, the top boots, and leather breeches, and blue coat of the day, superseded his present attire.

His character will develop itself more here-

after; and I will only add, that he was generally reputed a kind and benevolent master and landlord, a generous and steadfast friend, a rather strict, but very just, magistrate, a good and amiable, though not over-indulgent, parent, a very temperate man, by those who loved the bottle, and a very learned man, by the parson of the parish. On none of these things did he pride himself, however; for they were either natural to him, or acquired by following pertinaciously one even, well-considered course.

Let us leave him there, and go into another room of the house, where, walking up and down, was another gentleman greatly resembling him in person, but the very opposite in demeanor—at least at that moment. The drawing-room seemed too small for his hasty and agitated strides; and his eye, seeing nothing, was fixed with a haggard look upon some creature of his fancy. His well-formed person—handsomer than that of the Squire, more robust, more

graceful—seemed, one might say, disjointed with the strife of emotions within; and his exceedingly fine face was clouded with a look of anguish painful to behold. Yet this is Julian Westwood ; the son of a kind and judicious father, possessed of all that, to human eyes, would seem necessary for happiness; health, wealth, high education, a fine mind, a handsome person, and the love of all who knew him.

He was still in this state of agitation, when a servant, in very handsome livery, entered the room, and said :—

“ Here is Mr. Ludlow, sir, the carpenter, wishes to speak with you or your father.”

All trace of emotion was banished from young Westwood’s face in a moment.

“ Ah, poor Hal !” he said. “ I will see him ; but do not let any one else in to me to-night. How is his wife going on? I hope nothing is the matter with the child.”

“ I did not ask, sir,” said the servant—servants never do ask—and retired to usher in the carpenter.

Hal Ludlow did not remain above three minutes with Julian Westwood, though, as they were foster brothers, it is probable that the young squire, as he was called, treated him with all kindness, notwithstanding the painful pre-occupation of his own mind.

At the end of the time I have mentioned, the drawing-room door again opened, to give the good carpenter egress ; and the voice of Julian was heard, saying,

“Go to my father, Hal. Go to my father. He will tell you what name.”

Ludlow accordingly sought out the servant, and in two minutes more was in the presence of the Squire.

Mr. Westwood laid down his book, looking up mildly and pleasantly at his visitor.

“Good evening, Hal,” he said. “I am glad to see you. I hope your wife is going on quite well, now. Poor thing ! It was very sad to have her attacked with that fever ; but it is not uncommon, I believe, in her circumstances. She is a sweet,

pretty creature, and it would never do to lose the flower of the parish."

"She is a good creature, sir," replied Ludlow, warmly ; "but I am happy to say she is doing quite well now. She was down to-day for the first time, and we were talking about the christening, sir."

"Sit down, Hal ; sit down," said Mr. Westwood, pointing to a chair. "Well, what about the christening?"

"Why, you were kind enough to say, Squire, that you would be god-father," returned Ludlow, with a slight degree of hesitation, and seeming to pick his words with some care.

"And so I will," rejoined Mr. Westwood, nodding his head. "I will come down myself, whenever you like. We will have no substitutes. Godfathers and godmothers shall be there in presence. We will do it all in the good, hearty, old English fashion, Hal. When shall it be ? This day week, if you like. Mrs. Ludlow will be well enough by that time, I trust."

“Oh, dear, yes, sir,” answered the carpenter. “She is doing quite well now ; but the matter is, sir, that we were talking about what name to give the baby ; and I thought it best to come and ask you. Emma wants to have it christened Henry ; but I don’t like Henry, because it is my own name ; and I thought, perhaps, you would allow us to give it yours.”

Mr. Westwood put his finger under his velvet cap, and rubbed his temple, considerably. “Never cross a mother about her child’s name, Ludlow ; unless she choose a very outrageous one,” he said at length. “Henry should be one name, at all events, and you may give him my name, if you like ; but I hate the name of Robert—for the same not very logical reason that you assign, I suppose—because it is my own. Why not give him Julian’s ? It is a family name with us, as well as Robert. Call him Julian, Hal ; call him Julian. As you are foster-brothers, it will be natural enough, and proper too, I think. Let me know

the day, and the hour ; and I and Julian will come down together. Mary will be sorry that she is away travelling, when her friend Emma's baby is to be christened."

Thus it was, that the baby we have seen upon the nurse's knee, carried about with him through the world the names of Julian Henry Ludlow ; and the fact is not as unimportant as it may appear.

CHAPTER III.

WE will give the name of Waldon to the little village which is the scene of the present part of our story ; and merely remark, that, although it lay at no great distance from the bank of the river, it probably took its name from the hill behind it, on which the Squire's house stood, and which, by a sort of pleonasm, was called Waldon Hill, although Waldon, rendered into its ancient Saxon, would merely signify, Wood Hill, or Woody Hill.

In the five years which followed the birth of Julian Ludlow, the little village of Waldon improved considerably. Under the kindly patriotism of the Squire, the

ten preceding years had not been passed without an advance ; but they had been occupied rather by the sowing of the grain, and watching of the crop, than by the gathering any harvest. Now, however, the ear was coming to maturity, and the fruits were beginning to ripen. One prosperous man had made another prosperous man. A number of very good-looking houses had sprung up : the cottages ran actually down to the water's edge : a little quay and landing-place had been formed, where barges and boats were frequently unloaded ; and two or three shops of some pretension had been opened, smothering the small original chandler's shop of the place, but suffering it to grow up again, like a mushroom from a heap of manure, in the form of a somewhat smart grocery.

One of the neatest houses, one of the best fitted-up establishments, in the whole town, was that of Henry Ludlow, now carpenter, joiner, and cabinet-maker. He

had no less than six journeymen working under him, and had generally as much work as he could grapple with. He was still the same plain, good sort of person we have first represented him—kindly, unassuming, industrious, working hard himself, and expecting his workmen to do so likewise; but never asking them to do more than they could effect with ease, and having every consideration for sickness, or grief, or any other obstacle to labour. It was generally remarked that he was a rather grave man, and that he would often sigh, as if there were something that he still desired, and did not obtain; and yet he never complained to any one. The old ladies of the place declared that he regretted not having any more children; and perhaps it was so; for his love for the little Julian was very great, and perhaps there might be a superfluity in his breast for others, if they had come. But no more made their appearance; and Ludlow

might, perhaps, regret, I repeat, that he had not many another sporting round his knee.

Pretty Mistress Ludlow—for she was still as pretty a creature as the eye could rest upon—did not appear to share in her husband's feelings in this respect. Her whole soul seemed wrapped up in her darling boy; and a dozen certainly would not have made her happier. Well might she be proud of him : well might she rejoice in him ; for a finer boy was never seen ; and his handsome face and large hazel eyes, his curly hair and stalwart frame, won him many an admirer, who did not go far enough to learn the better qualities within. Though a little hot and passionate, he was full of affection, and ever docile to kindness. Gentle, too, though bold, he was ; and, at an age when falsehood is the commonest of sins, he was truth itself. He was a frequent visitor at Waldon Hall—the pet of Julian Westwood, who would often spend hours in playing

with him; and, moreover, he was much and kindly noticed by his god-father, the Squire, who, comparatively but little attracted by his beauty, seemed to discover and appreciate the high qualities of the boy's mind and heart, sooner than those who admired him most.

"That boy must be taken care of, Julian," he said one day, "and his education must be provided for. I am no advocate for forcing every good-looking or every clever lad into a higher station than that in which God has placed him; but I think there is something remarkable in that child, which is worth careful tendence."

This was said with some sadness; and indeed the spirits of good Mr. Westwood, once even and bright, had by this time become greatly depressed by one of those domestic afflictions which mingle in the portion of all men, but are heavier upon the warm-hearted than upon the ordinary people of the world.

I must pause for a moment, even though

it interrupt the narrative, to explain the occasion of a melancholy which affected the whole course of a good man's after life.

Mr. Westwood had lost his only daughter, about two years after the birth of Julian Ludlow. This would not appear sufficient cause for such permanent grief as her father endured, had not circumstances been connected with it, which doubled the darkness of the shadow. When exceedingly young, not eighteen years of age, a proposal for her hand had been made by a college companion of her brother. From a just appreciation of the young man's character, Mr. Westwood had, at once, rejected his suit, and begged to decline his acquaintance. I have said, from a just appreciation of his character ; because his brief aftercourse showed that nothing but misery could have sprung from a connexion with such a man. Within two years after his proposal was made, he had gambled away his whole inheritance ; had become largely

in debt ; had been tempted to forge, in order to procure means of pursuing his un-eradicable vice ; had been detected, and had shot himself in prison, to escape public punishment.

Long, however, before this had occurred, Mr. Westwood had discovered that, prior to making a proposal to himself for his daughter's hand, the man he had rejected had contrived to entangle Mary's affections.

When she found that her father had positively declined his suit, and forbidden his visits at the house, it was evident that though she seemed to bear his decision calmly and patiently, she had suffered a bitterer disappointment than she was willing any one should perceive. She became restless, melancholy, fond of solitude. She lost appetite, and sleep, and cheerfulness. Her strength failed, the colour departed from her cheek, and the brightness of her eyes contrasted strangely and dangerously with the sickliness of her hue. Mr. Westwood grieved bitterly ; but he did not yield ; though he looked anxiously for any means

of withdrawing his daughter's mind from the subject of her grief, and of restoring her to health and to peace, if not to happiness.

It so occurred, that, about the time of Julian Ludlow's birth, a short period of peace intervened between England and the Continental powers, and Europe was thrown open to British travellers. Some friends of the family proposed to make a tour of the Continent, and to take Mary with them; and such was the reason of her absence from the christening, which she would otherwise have attended; for Emma was a dear though humble friend of hers. Julian accompanied his sister as far as Paris; and left her, he said, in better health and spirits. But such good tidings were not of long duration. Ere many weeks were over, intelligence reached him of the suicide of his former friend; and very shortly after, a letter informed Mr. Westwood that his daughter's health gave serious alarm to the friends with whom she was travelling. She herself gave a better

account ; but the next letter, which came about a month subsequently, caused both father and son to set off, in haste, to join her on the Continent. She was brought back, by slow journeys, to England; and the air of her native land seemed, for a time, to revive her.

But the fatal disease had obtained a hold which it never relaxed. At first, fresh spirits seemed to come upon her with the sight of the dwelling of her youth, and the old familiar trees, and the room she had dwelt in so long; and her father and brother both entertained good hope. Nor was the effect of the mental medicine so transitory as might have been supposed. It was not merely a spark, to be extinguished as soon as lighted : a slight return of colour came into her cheek : her lips lost their ashy whiteness : the thin skeleton hand became round and soft again ; but yet, a little cough, more troublesome by night than by day, lingered about her still ; and somehow she could not, or she did not, sleep till night was meeting with the morning. She

would come down, too, earlier than she had been lately accustomed to do : she would appear at the breakfast table : she would stroll out into the park, and seat herself beneath a shady tree—sometimes with her brother, who devoted himself to her with a love and tenderness rarely seen—sometimes with a book ; and, on all occasions, it was evident that she made a noble struggle to avoid lonely thought. She had enough of solitude and reflection in the watches of the night.

One of Mary Westwood's first acts was to send for Emma Ludlow ; and their meeting was kind and tender. Emma brought her baby with her, now a fine, round-cheeked infant, with eyes that seemed eager to take in everything ; and Mary took the child upon her lap, and kissed him, and fondled him, and smilingly gave him back to her friend, saying, " I am afraid I should spoil him, Emma, if he were mine. Mind *you* do not."

Then Emma replied, that he was such a

cherub that he could not be spoiled ; and they both laughed gaily, till Mary fell into a fit of weeping.

Emma often came back, and often brought the little boy ; and although Mary's cough increased as Winter came on, and although the physicians forbade her to quit the house, or one suite of rooms, kept at an even temperature, yet, by these wise precautions, well attended to, she saw the Spring come rushing forth in her green garments, not much worse in health than she had been in the Autumn ; and when the air became mild and kindly, she was permitted to come down, and go forth again for little drives, and sit in the park under her favourite trees. Whether she suffered much at any time, whether she feared for her own life, or was unconscious of danger at this period, no one ever knew ; for she was the most uncomplaining spirit upon earth, and would have borne her fate meekly, whatever it might have been.

Emma Ludlow's little boy was, by this time, grown beyond knowledge ; could run

alone, though with many a fall upon the greensward of the park; could pick the daisies and other wild flowers at the feet of his mother and her fair companion; and he seemed to get even greater hold upon Mary's heart than upon the affections of the rest of the family. After her death, it was found that she had left him a thousand pounds, which she possessed independent of her father or brother; and with the income arising from this sum, Emma Ludlow and her husband resolved, with ambition not unnatural, to give the boy a better education than they themselves had received, entertaining at first a thought of bringing him up for the church.

But to go on with the history of poor Mary Westwood. During the whole of her illness, her conduct to her father was perfect. She seemed to feel that he might, in his own mind, though he spoke not of it, attribute the malady under which she suffered, to his own act, and feel grief and regret on that account, though not self-re-

proach. In his presence, she was always more cheerful than at other times. With her brother she strove to be cheerful too ; but the task was more difficult. Between them there was that confidence which exists only between the young—the pouring forth of the mutual heart, the flowing of thought into thought, and the communication of feeling for feeling. Thus their conversation would often turn upon subjects which set the floodgates of emotion wide ; and, more than once, poor Mary's interviews with her brother were mingled largely with tears.

The Squire himself seemed to understand it all, and he was very sad ; especially when he saw any of those signs, for which he was always anxiously on the watch, of a fresh step in the downward course of his daughter's health. He expressed no sort of remorse or regret for what he had done in the case of Mary's lover ; for he felt none. He believed—he knew—that he had acted rightly ; and,

though bitterly pained at having been obliged so to act, and profoundly grieved at the consequences, he never alluded to the subject ; knowing, that even to explain the motives which had actuated him, would be only tearing open again the wound in his daughter's heart, which he fondly fancied might yet be healed.

It was inevitable, however. One slight imprudence towards the close of the second Autumn—one half hour's lingering in the open air, after the wind had become cold and raw—gave the last blow. Mary Westwood never left the house again, till she was carried out—dust. The long train of hopes and fears, the alternations from day to day, the weekly progress towards the tomb, were so slow that the change from the drawing-room to the bed-room, from the sofa to the bed, was unobservable.

It was not till life hung quivering, ready to flit away from the expiring lamp, that Mary ever ventured to allude, in speaking

to her father, to the painful circumstances of the past.

It was night, and he was taking leave of her, when she gently held him by the hand for a moment, and said—

“There is something I want to say to you, my dear father. I want to speak a word or two about the past: to thank you for all your kindness; to tell you I believe that you judged better than I could have done—and—and—But I will not talk of it now,” she added, seeing a dark shadow come upon her father’s face. “To-morrow we will talk of it. I am weary to-night, and so are you.”

But that morrow, for Mary Westwood, never came. When her brother stole into her room in the morning, the woman, who had been sitting up with her, said she had rested well, and was still asleep.

She rested well, indeed; and *was* asleep—for ever!

When her father was told of the event,

his first grief was immoderate and strange in a man so firm and steady in his thoughts and principles. But, after a time, with the tears still in his eyes, he grasped his son's hand, saying—

“Better so, Julian, than the wife of a villain !”

But, whatever Mr. Westwood might say, a wound was in his own heart, which not even Time could cure.

CHAPTER IV.

ABOUT five miles from Waldon, lay a small, neat, pretty country town. It had the advantages of a little Square, or market-place, of a market-day on Saturday, a Post-office, with a delivery—even in those times—once a day, and an annual fair. Now, it was the second day of the fair in the town of Ash Locombe ; for the fair lasted three days ; but the first was composed principally of preparations, and the last of fragments ; inasmuch as the fairs in two neighbouring towns were so inconveniently near, in point of time, as hardly to leave

that of poor little Ash a space to niche itself in between them.

The second day, then, was the great day of the fair, and the market-place was enriched by a number of the relics of St. Bartholomew, as well as by a multitude of peculiar and characteristic objects from the neighbouring country. On one side were fat oxen, and fatter pigs, Atlasian sheep, which had much ado to carry the world of wool upon their backs, and horses with their tails done up with straw, as indications of the intention of selling themselves as readily as any political rogue to a winning party. Samples of grain, and peas, and beans, were there also, and a variety of vegetable specimens of the big things that the power of man can force out of the bowels of mother earth; and men hawking brandy-balls, and stalls with gingerbread, some plain, some gilt—as if gingerbread ever wanted gilding! I vow, though I hate medicine, that I would at this moment take a hundred pills of it,

totally ungilt, upon the smallest consideration—or upon no consideration at all, if I could but get it. Then there were boys with apples in their hands; and bigger boys with a devilish invention for scraping people's backs, and making ladies think that their gowns were torn; and smaller boys with penny trumpets—more diabolical still.

Moreover—worse than all—there was a man with a big trumpet, mounted upon the stage of a perambulatory theatre, and dressed in the worn-out suit of a beef-eater, with a countenance as resplendent as his coat, although the Tyrian dye with which his face was tinged, was probably limpid and white when he swallowed it. He blew and he spoke, by turns, to the gaping crowd which stood beneath, hanging on his words. When he blew, he seemed to blow all the blood into his nose—luckily, he did not blow it all out. When he spoke, it seemed as if he would have burst his whole frame; and certain it is, he had

already gone so far as to crack his voice. Though not a soul could distinguish a word that he said, his eloquence—it was action, action, action, according to Demosthenes—persuaded a great number of people to mount and walk in, to see a bloody tragedy that was to be performed in the interior, of which a pictorial representation was given without, displaying horrors such as the tyrant of Padua himself had never conceived. Probably he would have persuaded more to enter, but that hard by was an enormous caravan of what people frequently call dumb animals—a slander upon them, to which they indignantly gave the lie from time to time, by outroaring the trumpeter, and out-screaming the trumpet; while over all the din rose up the dong, dong, dong, the clash, clash, and the jingle, jingle, of the drums, cymbals, and triangles of half-a-dozen wandering bands, each playing a different tune.

At a respectful distance from these

grander shows, but still not far from one of the principal entrances to the fair, was a booth of less pretensions, across the canvass-front of which was painted, in letters two feet long, an invitation to men, women, and children, to enter and behold feats of mighty necromancy, performed by the great and celebrated Doctor Pequinillo, the world-renowned magician of Toledo. Before this booth, there was less din ; and the only living attractions, apparent without, were a man with a lugubrious face, dressed as a merry-Andrew, and a little girl, with her hair tricked out with pink ribbons, and her person not too much covered by a spangled frock of very dirty muslin. The man in the clown's jacket might be an Andrew, but he certainly was not very merry—outside the booth at least ; and he seemed to have taken offence against some one ; for his only audible words were—addressed to the girl, by the way—

“D—n him, I haven't had a gill all day,

and it's half-past ten now. Curse me if I'll be witty on cold water."

Nevertheless, the celebrated Pequinillo seemed to find favor in the citizens of Ash; for, every now and then, a little knot of people mounted the ladder and went in; and amongst the rest, were a highly respectable-looking gentleman, of about thirty-five, tall, good-looking, and well-made, dressed in a black coat; a lady, some six or seven years younger than himself, exceedingly pretty, and tastefully though plainly dressed; and a little boy between five and six years of age, with a profusion of bright brown curls hanging round his sunny face. The merry-Andrew was instantly struck with their appearance, and, taking their money, ushered them to one of the front seats, very near a little stage or platform, across which a curtain was drawn.

There, however, they had to wait many minutes, and until the booth was full of people, before the famous magician of

Toledo, Doctor Pequinillo, thought fit to make his appearance. The little boy with the great wavy curls, was all impatience; and more than once he turned his beautiful eyes to his mother, and enquired, with the sweet accents of childhood, when they would begin.

“You must be patient—you must be patient,” said Emma Ludlow. “There! they won’t be long now. You see Mr. Merryman has come in and shut the door, and now he has gone behind the curtain. I dare say they won’t be a minute.”

A little hand-bell, with the tiniest sound in the world, was heard to ring, a moment or two after; and then the curtain rose majestically, displaying a stage about ten feet long, and six feet deep, with not badly painted side-scenes about seven feet high. The scene-painter had not required a ladder. In the middle of the stage was a table, with a great number of curious implements upon it. By the side of the

table stood Mr. Merryman, now bowing very low, with an affected look of lack-a-dasical amazement, to the master whom he had been objurgating, for lack of drink, a few minutes before on the outside of the theatre.

Behind the table stood Doctor Pequillo himself: a most magnificent personage, dressed in rusty black velvet—which had once evidently been a lady's gown—cut in an antique fashion, and trimmed with silver lace. On his head he wore a cap and plume, and in his hand he carried a white wand, probably as the badge and token of his art. His skin was of that rough and porous texture which generally accompanies hair of a Seville orange color; but, strange to say, there were proofs positive, which it had never entered into the head of Julian Ludlow to deny, that he was a dark-haired man. In the first place, his wig, which at one time might have belonged to Eugene or Marlborough, was as black as that of Charles the Second, from the

caul to the extremity of the longest horse-hair. Then again, he wore a most outrageous pair of moustachios (moustachios of any kind were invaluable rarities in England in those days ;) and these moustachios were not only profoundly impressive, by reason of their length, breadth, and thickness, but were also profoundly black, and gave him the appearance of having buried his upper lip, and a part of his nose, in a strip of bear-skin. He was a tall, stout fellow ; and his face, despite of skin, wig, and moustachios, was a pleasant and good-humored one.

The performance commenced by a dialogue between Doctor Pequinillo and Mr. Merryman, in which the former showed what excellent vernacular Anglo-Saxon can be acquired at Toledo in Spain ; and the latter brought forth a number of very ancient jokes by spasmodic efforts, which probably would have been mitigated, if the parturition had been assisted by a little hot gin-and-water. Then came the conjuring,

which was really a very creditable display of skill on the part of the Doctor, and highly delighted little Julian Ludlow, who, though full of native acuteness, could not by any means divine how a live pigeon, a wig, and a pocket-handkerchief, could be produced from an old hat, where there was nothing the moment before. The cups and balls gave him infinite satisfaction; but when he saw a gold watch knocked all to pieces, and pounded in a mortar, and then restored as fully as a Phoenix, by the simple process of tying it up in the corner of a pocket-handkerchief, his ecstasy exceeded all bounds; and, jumping up, he clapped his hands most conspicuously.

This gesture might probably be the cause why Doctor Pequinillo, at that moment, turned his looks towards the little boy and his parents; but why or wherefore the countenance of the magician suddenly changed—why such a look of meaning came into his face, not unmingled with perturbation—and why the next trick failed

altogether, are other questions to which it is more difficult to give an answer.

Be that as it may, the Doctor instantly recovered himself, and stifled the hissing propensities of his spectators, by throwing up a pack of cards, and nailing the one called, to a post, by a pistol shot. Nor did it seem that anything in the countenance of little Julian, of his mother, or of his father, had troubled the mighty man ; for the boy was selected from all the rest, many times, to act the spectator's part in several of the tricks ; was made intimately acquainted with the learned pig, and called upon to taste the wine just concocted out of a bottle of sand.

Julian thought it the best sand he had ever tasted, and, at the end of the exhibition, went away, thinking Doctor Pequinillo one of the most magnificent men in the whole world.

The part played by the little girl, in the dirty spangled muslin, I have passed over as

unworthy of minute description in so grave a work; being merely the exhibition of a horn-pipe to relieve the magician's fatigues, and the balancing herself for five minutes on the end of a poker, fixed upright in a socket on the floor, which she did in an agony of grace and mortal terror.

The adventures of the day, however, were not yet over. Hardly had Mr. and Mrs. Ludlow and their young companion got out of the booth, and mingled with the crowd which were assembled in the market-place, when a loud shout was heard, a tremendous rush took place, and the alarming exclamation of "A mad bull! a mad bull!" burst from a hundred lips around. All was dismay and confusion. A terrified man almost knocked Mrs. Ludlow down: a woman rushed between her and little Julian, separating them from each other in a moment: Ludlow himself, though a powerful man, was borne, heaven knows where, by the tumbling crowd; and what would have become of the poor little boy

can hardly be told, if he had not found his arm seized by a tiny hand, not much bigger than his own, while a voice exclaimed—“Come hither, come hither, curly-head!” Looking round, he saw the girl in the spangled muslin, who, with a degree of courage and dexterity only to be acquired by long acquaintance with such scenes, dragged him on through the crowd, piloting him quite safely till they reached the steps of Doctor Pequinillo’s booth, when she led him up those steps and into the interior.

The Doctor himself was standing in the front of his stage, in the midst of the empty booth, evidently looking for the arrival or return of somebody. Did I say the Doctor himself? I ought rather to have said, the remains of Doctor Pequinillo; for the Doctor was an altered man. The rusty velvet was there: the tarnished silver lace was there: the moustachios were there, broad, black, and bushy as the forelock of a Highland pony; but the wig was gone, and on the spot which it had

occupied, appeared a short but luxuriant crop of brilliant red hair, which, had Julian been imaginative, he might have fancied had burnt the departed wig all to pieces.

“Ah, my little jewel, is that you?” cried the Doctor, holding out his arms, and lifting Julian on the stage. “Don’t be afraid, my little fellow. I won’t put you into a bottle or a tea-caddy, or change you into an oyster.—But, Peggy, you little darling, where are the others? I told you to bring all three.”

“I could not, magnifico,” replied the little girl, with a smile infinitely more sweet than those which writhed her countenance while she was standing on the the poker. “They were all dispersed by the charge of a mad bull, and I could but catch hold of the little man, and bring him here in safety.”

“Mr. Merryman, Mr. Merryman,” shouted the Doctor, in a loud voice, still holding Julian’s hand; and, in response, from a back

apartment of the booth, (the proximity of which doubtless facilitated the Doctor's magic not a little) the bull's-head and shoulders of the merry-Andrew were thrust in with a very discomfited squareness of countenance.

"Mr. Merryman," said the Doctor, in an authoritative tone, "have the kindness to put on your jerkin again, and seek out in the crowd, the lady and gentleman who were here with this little boy."

"Ah," said Mr. Merryman, with a grin, interrupting his master who had not half done his oration. "People seek needles in a pottle of hay, who know needles when they see them. How I am to know this boy's two needles?"

"Hark'e, my friend," cried the Doctor, "this is no time for chopping logic. You saw them sitting here, on that front bench. I'll tell you how you'll know them. If you do not find them, you'll drink water all day ; for you have not got a *sous* in your pocket, and I'll not give you one. If you

do find them, I'll give you a pint of Deady's best to keep you warm in bed."

"The very best definition I have met with since I read Euclid," exclaimed the merry-Andrew. And casting a somersault from the stage to the first bench, and from the first bench to the doorway, he was out of the booth in a moment.

"Here, come and look at all these pretty things," said Doctor Pequinillo, leading Julian up to the table. "Isn't that a pretty bird in the cage?"

While Julian examined a small bird, painted all manner of colours, the Doctor got fiddling with the collar of his little coat, contrived to unbutton it, and turned it down over his shoulders.

"Don't undress me," said Julian, rather crossly. "I am not going to bed here.—It's not bed time either."

"Well, well! That will do," returned the Doctor, buttoning up his coat again; "that will do. I only wanted to see if your neck was as fair as your face."

“My face is quite brown,” said Julian, not yet quite satisfied.

But Doctor Pequinillo, with his good-humour, and his infinity of tricks, soon contrived to draw the little boy’s attention in a different way, and had completely won his heart before Mrs. Ludlow and her husband, re-united by the skill and diligence of the merry-Andrew, made their appearance at the door of the booth, with unsubdued terror and anxiety in their faces.

Mrs. Ludlow, yielding to the first impulse, sprang forward to the stage, and caught little Julian to her heart. But Ludlow, as he was following her, stopped suddenly, and exclaimed,

“Gracious heaven! Kit Markus!”

“Kit Markus!” echoed Emma Ludlow, suddenly looking up, and now, for the first time, feeling secure that Julian was there in her own bosom, quite safe and unhurt; “why, I can hardly believe my eyes.”

“They tell quite true, nevertheless,” re-

plied the famous Doctor. "Kit Markus! who has only changed a drudging profession for a gay and profitable one, and a lowly name for a high-sounding one. You recollect, Hal, that I was always fond of conjuring tricks, and of making conjuring toys, when I ought to have been making joists and cross-beams—of teaching dogs to dance and play on the fiddle, when I should have been driving a plane, or pulling a saw. Many a time you rated me with very little effect; and, to tell the truth, I felt that I was neither doing justice to you nor myself. So I took to the trade for which Nature cut me out, perfecting myself in it; and here I am."

"But where on earth did you get such a pair of black moustachios?" exclaimed Mrs. Ludlow.

"Nature gave me the moustachios," replied the Doctor; "and I gave them the color. I was afraid, Emma, of frightening the learned pig with the thought of a pig's final consummation, if I left them of their

original fiery look ; and so I dyed them black ; and as to the wig—there it lies. And so you really did not know me?"

"Not in the least," answered Ludlow ; "but how could one, when you looked as if you had got a shoe-brush on your lips, and a horse-hair mattress on your head ? And so, Kit, you find it a profitable employment, conjuring, do you ?"

"Wonderful, wonderful !" responded the Doctor. "Depend upon it, Hal, to make a trade of other people's blindness and folly, is, in this world, the surest road to fortune."

"But how did you make the wig turn into a pigeon ?" exclaimed little Julian, who was by this time becoming quite familiar with the great man.

"Ah, my dear, that's one of my secrets," answered Kit Markus. "Would *you* like to be a conjuror ?"

"Very much," cried Julian, eagerly.

The Doctor took him up and gave him a kiss, tickling his face desperately with the

moustachios. "So this is the little boy," he said.

Hal Ludlow nodded his head, and the Doctor went on to ask if he had any other children. The question was evidently a painful one to the good carpenter ; but Emma Ludlow replied, in a gay tone,

"This is our only treasure, Kit ; and, if God spares us this one, I shall be quite content."

The conjuror looked at her with an expression of great interest, and rejoined warmly—

"God spare him to you, Emma ; and now, as we shut up for a couple of hours, while all the folks are at dinner, let us dine also. I am a rich man, and can afford to treat my friends to a bottle of wine."

"No, no, Kit," said Emma, "we'll get home to dinner. I have had such a fright with that bull, and the loss of dear little Julian, that I shan't be happy till I am out of this horrid fair."

“But you promised me a ginger-bread Whittington,” cried Julian, afraid of being disappointed of his prize.

“We will get one as we go along,” observed Ludlow ; and then, turning to Doctor Pequinillo, he added, “Come and see us, Kit, when you have got time. We are well to do now, and I have all the business in the place. I have contrived to buy four houses in Waldon since you saw me, and we get on very well. You’ll surely be able to find a day or two to spend with us. In the Winter time you can’t have much to do.”

“I beg your pardon,” returned Kit Markus. “In the Winter time I go out to conjure at gentlemen’s houses, for three guineas a night, and puzzle all the little holiday-folks beyond conception. But I’ll find a time to run down, and see my old friends; only remember, when I come to Waldon, it must be Kit Markus again, and not Doctor Pequinillo. Now, Peggy ;

run to the door, and see if the bull business is over."

The little girl in the spangled muslin skipped over the benches, and up to the door, whence, looking back with her gay, but somewhat worn, countenance, she replied—

"It's all quiet, and the place nearly empty. Almost all the folks have gone to dinner."

Her services were not forgotten by Ludlow and his wife; and, as they went out, after bidding Kit Markus a hearty farewell, the former slipped a crown piece into her hand, which rejoiced the cockles of her heart, more than most things ever did in life; for it was the first she ever had, and she knew the bitter taste of poverty.

CHAPTER V.

NOTWITHSTANDING the caution of poor Mary Westwood, Julian Ludlow ran a great risk of being spoiled. Hal Ludlow himself a man of the very kindest heart, and not without judgment, where his affections did not strongly interfere, was a person very easily persuaded by the voice of love. Moreover, he appeared to have a certain sort of timidity in regard to crossing little Julian, which led him to indulge the boy in whatever he seemed most to desire. This is not an uncommon failing with the fathers and mothers of only children, and has its cause, perhaps, in the same care and tenderness which leads us to touch so

tenderly, and guard so carefully, any precious thing in our possession which cannot be replaced. Emma Ludlow did not love the boy less ; but she was rather more resolute with him, although, perhaps, not as much as she ought to have been ; and many a little whim or caprice, which might have been very beneficially checked, was suffered to have its way, fostering a natural impetuosity of disposition by habitual indulgence.

Neither Ludlow nor his wife, however, spoiled the boy half so much as Julian Westwood, the young Squire, as he was called. Originally of a gay, happy, and somewhat hasty disposition, the loss of his sister, and the painful circumstances which were, probably, the remote cause of her death, had depressed his high spirits, but, at the same time, had matured or evolved many noble qualities of mind and heart, which had been hidden by the sparkle of his earlier manners, as the depth of the waters is often concealed by the ripple that

plays over them, under the wing of the Spring wind. He had loved his sister better than anything else on earth; and, when she was gone, the necessity of loving something else in her place, seemed strong upon him. Little Julian was the nearest object; and it is probable, from various circumstances, that, even if the boy had not been as beautiful and engaging as he was, Julian Westwood would have learned to play with, to spoil, and to love him, as much, or more than any other child. He had him up to the Hall as often as Emma Ludlow could spare him. He talked to him; he told him stories; he sported with him on the grass. He never rode through the village without having something in his pocket for little Julian; and perhaps some scandal might have arisen—for there were gossips in Waldon, as well as elsewhere—if the young Squire had ever dismounted at the door of Hal Ludlow's house, when he himself was out. This he never did, however, and, indeed, seldom dismounted at

all ; for if he wanted to talk with Mr. Ludlow, he called him out of the shop, and the carpenter would often walk beside his horse, half way up to the Park.

All this went on after Mary Westwood's death, for more than a year ; till, at length, the Squire taking it into his head that his son was wasting his days at home, in no very visible occupation, solely for the purpose of cheering him under the deep gloom which had fallen upon him, spoke to him seriously on the subject, and told him that it would be much better for him, either to obtain a seat in Parliament, or to travel over the British Isles themselves, or any foreign countries, which might be still open to the foot of the English traveller.

Julian Westwood determined to wander over Great Britain ; not as a careless and superficial tourist, but with an observing and an acquiring spirit. We need not, however, dwell long upon well-formed schemes, intentions, and purposes. It is a broad, general rule, to which the exceptions are

few, that schemes are never executed, intentions never fulfilled. Circumstances without, caprice within, are generally able to blow such light things as plans and purposes to the sky ; and Julian Westwood's travels lasted not many months, and extended not many hundred miles. His father was surprised to find that, after having proceeded diligently through several counties in the South, West, and middle of England, he seemed to come to a sudden halt in a beautiful part of that beautiful county, Yorkshire. The Squire received letters from him once or twice a week, which described picturesque scenery, pleasant sporting excursions, and agreeable society. This lasted a full month ; and then came a letter from Julian to his father, saying that, if he had no objection, he was going to be married. Now, the Squire had no objection in the world ; for Julian was nearly six-and-twenty years of age, and Mr. Westwood approved of early marriages. When the young man's

travelling on the continent was talked of, the subject of his probable marriage had been mentioned; and Mr. Westwood had assured him that his consent would be readily given, adding merely—"Don't bring me home a foreigner, or a fine lady."

In the present instance, the choice of Julian Westwood met his father's views in all respects. The girl whom he selected was the only daughter of a baronet, of old family, and of sufficient wealth, though not great riches. She had been well educated, had seen something of cities and Courts, but preferred the country to the one, and domestic life to the other.

Such was the account given of her by the lover; and, as Mr. Westwood put himself into his carriage to go down at once and signify his consent in person, he said to himself—"She is very beautiful, I dare say; for she seems to have captivated Julian completely, in a very short space of time."

He found himself mistaken, however. She was not very beautiful. She was graceful, well-formed, and her features were small, but by no means very handsome. Yet there was in her face that winning something—all-indescribable, but all-powerful over human hearts—which spoke at once to the father, as it had spoken to the son, saying, and saying truly, “I am full of kindness, gentleness, affection; ready to love and be beloved, without a shadow in my character, or a dark place in my heart. If my spirit is bright, it is gentle and docile too, and, at all events, you see it without disguise in my every look, and word, and action.”

They were married; and the bride came to her new home, brightening all things by her presence. Even her sunshine, however, could not altogether dispel the shadow upon the old Squire’s spirit; but it lightened it notwithstanding; and often she would go into his library, to seek for a book, and, finding him there, would remain for two or

three hours, making them the most cheerful of his existence.

Little Julian was soon introduced to young Mistress Westwood, and his favour at the Hall did not seem at all to surprise her. She became as fond of the boy as her husband, though she did not spoil him ; and she very soon went down to see Hal Ludlow and his wife, and sat with them in their small, neat house for an hour. Even the birth of her first infant, when Julian Ludlow was still in early childhood, did not in the slightest degree diminish the kindness of her demeanour towards him. He was as frequently at the Hall as ever, as much loved, as much petted ; and seemed to be but as the new-come little girl's elder brother.

It was to the old Squire, however, that Julian first owed any signal advantage ; and that was brought about by one of his defects. The circumstance is too trifling to relate. It occurred a few days after the fair at Ash Locombe, in re-

gard to a plaything which had been bought for him there, and exhibited the impetuosity of his disposition so strongly before old Mr. Westwood's eyes, that he fell into a fit of musing, entertaining considerable doubt as to how he ought to act.

"I will talk with Margaret about it," he thought. And, his son having gone out to shoot, he called his daughter-in-law into the library, saying—"Come hither, my dear, and solve a case of conscience for me."

He then referred to the trifling occurrence which Mistress Westwood had witnessed as well as himself. "This boy, you know, Margaret," he continued, "is my godson, and a charming little fellow he is. People may talk of blood as much as they please; but this child is designed for a gentleman of Nature's making. He was very much loved, too, by our poor Mary who has left us; and I may very well, therefore, be interested on every account in his future fate. But his father

spoils him : his mother spoils him nearly as much : and my good son, your husband, spoils him more than all. Now, I do not consider, my dear Margaret, that my having undertaken the office of god-father, gives me the slightest right in the world to dictate, or, indeed, to interfere with the education of the boy, so long as his parents are living, in their proper senses, and good and respectable people. The appointment of god-fathers and god-mothers was originally devised in times of sanguinary persecution, for the purpose of ensuring, as far as mortal foresight could ensure, that children should be brought up in the Christian faith if their parents should be cut off during their infancy ; and nobody but a conceited and intermeddling fool would attempt to take from parents, the authority and discretion over a child, which God himself has been pleased to give them. Nevertheless, it would greatly pain me to see the impetuosity of this dear little fellow encouraged to a dangerous

height, by the fondness of his father and mother. I do not like to interfere, and yet I am strongly inclined to do so."

"What do you think would be the best course with him?" asked Mistress Westwood.

"To send him to some good preparatory school," replied the Squire. "There is an excellent one in the neighbourhood."

"There can be no harm in suggesting it," remarked his daughter-in-law, with a smile; "nor can it be considered as the slightest unwarrantable interference; for you are bound to see that he learns the Catechism in the vulgar tongue; and I don't know any place where he could learn it better."

"Maggy, you are laughing at me," said Mr. Westwood, shaking his head.

"Not in the least, my dear father," she replied, taking his hand and kissing it; "you know your Margaret is a blithe bird, who always sings gaily. But I meant exactly what I said. I think it is quite rea-

sonable that you should suggest such a course to Mr. Ludlow and his wife ; and Emma has too much sense not to be obliged to you for so doing. If *you* have any scruples, *I* will do it."

"No, no," returned the Squire. "I will ride down to-day, my dear. Ludlow is a sensible man too, and has been well educated, in his sphere of life. I took care of that—solely, I am sorry to say, because he was Julian's foster-brother. I trust I should do so now on better motives. Some selfish ingredient is sure to find its way into almost all our actions—that is, in some shape or other ; for we seldom recognize it for that which it really is. However, as I educated the father, I don't see why I should not educate the son."

Mr. Westwood, accordingly, rode down as he proposed, and had a long conversation with Ludlow and his wife on the boy's future prospects.

The Squire was rather startled, at first, at what he considered the parents' some-

what ambitious views for their only child. The church was very venerable in his eyes; and, though by no means an illiberal man, he would fain have no one enter it who could not maintain himself in respectability, without being obliged to "live by the altar," in a land where thousands are squandered hourly upon pampering the body, or indulging the taste, but every penny is grudged that goes to the improvement of the mind, or the edification of the soul. Mr. Westwood was not a hasty nor an obstinate man, however; and those two qualities, hastiness and obstinacy, go more frequently together than people generally imagine. He paused thoughtfully, listening to parental schemes, and all the time cogitating over the different bearings of the question. Even after Ludlow and his wife had ceased, he still remained a moment or two in thought; but, at length, asked—

"Have you considered the question, my good friends, in every point of view? As

far as you have gone yet, you have only shown the bright side. I will admit that such a bright side may, and does, exist. Julian has considerable abilities, a great power of acquisition, and, very probably, will distinguish himself at school and at college, take a degree creditable to himself, and obtain a living. But then, on the other hand, all this will take a long time to bring about, and a great deal of pain may be necessarily suffered by the way ; while, even supposing him eminently successful, he will certainly need, for some years after he enters his profession, a totally distinct independence. I do not mean to say anything disagreeable, Ludlow, and you know that I have no foolish pride about me ; but, at the very first school of a higher class which Julian enters, he will be subject to much annoyance from his school-fellows. Pride is the devil's drop in the blood of us all ; and it is much more rampant in boyhood, before it has been chastised by the world, than in

after years, when, in many instances, it has been drowned in tears. One of the first questions always asked of a boy, is, 'What is your father?' Then comes the laugh, and the scoff, and the gibe, if the reply be not satisfactory to the young inquisitor. Julian is of an impetuous spirit. How do you think he will bear all this?"

"Perhaps it may do him good, sir," answered Mr. Ludlow, adding, "As to the means, I trust we shall be able to do pretty well. Miss Mary's kindness to the dear boy will do much at first. Thank God, we are doing well too, and I do not think that, either at school or at College, we shall find it too much to support him—I trust not, at least, though I know that all trades are uncertain, and that many a thing may happen to hurt mine."

"Make your mind easy on that score, Ludlow," returned the Squire, who had resolved on his course as he came down the hill. "He is my god-son, you know ; and for his education, till he takes his degree,

I will provide. I only feared that you might not have the means of rendering him independent of his profession for some years after his first entrance upon it. I fear with the habits he acquires at College, and the society he must mingle with, you will find that, until he gets a good living two hundred a-year will be the least that is required for his support."

"I thank you very much for your great kindness, sir," replied Ludlow, without the slightest pretence of declining the Squire's offer. "It is more than we could expect of you; but, as to the future, I will trust in God, and have no fear. We are thriving: I have got together a little money: we don't spend near what we make; and all that your kindness saves us in the boy's bringing up, shall be carefully put by for a rainy day. Then he will have fifty pounds a-year of his own, and all the interest laid by. I think we can make it do, sir, even if he *should* want two hundred a-year; though that is a large

sum, on which I hardly calculated. I know it didn't cost me fifty when I was first out of my apprenticeship."

The Squire, smiled—"You had different habits from those you intend to give him," he answered; "and, depend upon it, my calculation is moderate."

Ludlow and his wife mused a moment or two, but did not seem at all shaken in their purpose.

"Well," said the Squire, at length, "so be it then; and now the first thing I would recommend, is, that you send the little man to Mrs. Swanforth's school. It is but four miles distant; so that you are within reach of him when you please. It is a good school, I know; and it will afford a preparation for all he has to go through in a public school. The first thing a child has to learn, and the most important throughout life, is, that he must submit to discipline. Now, the very regularity and primness of a preparatory school, if he acquires nothing else there, teaches this; and

it is an inestimable advantage. I will ride over myself, this very day, and make all arrangements ; and, if you will take my advice, you will send him next quarter, which commences, I think, in three weeks."

Thus, Julian Ludlow was sent to school, and entered upon a new world, consisting of spelling-books, and small bed-posts, and dimity curtains.

CHAPTER VI.

So many accounts have been written lately of school life, and college life, some of them relating to the very period in history to which my narrative refers, that I do not think I could impart any new interest to the often-told tale; and therefore, with the readers' good leave, I will trip lightly over these early years of Julian Ludlow, only noticing two or three little scattered incidents which either displayed his character or affected his fate. It is not that recollection does not serve me with many a scene, and many a character, presented to me in my own boyhood, which might be

wrought out with some effect : but, though many of my companions of those days have gone whither I must soon follow them, others are living; some in quiet and unobtrusive poverty; some in all the splendour of wealth and rank; some plodding the even tenor of their way along the noiseless paths and shady lanes of life; some starting forth from the canvas of history, as the actors of great deeds, and the winners of glorious fame; and I do think that, if there be, as I believe, something sacred in friendship which should shield it from rough exposure to indifferent eyes, there is something still more sacred in those boyish companionships, which throw the whole heart open, and leave the character without disguise.

At the preparatory school, Julian Ludlow was not long enough either to learn much, or to have his disposition cowed. He was a little timid, at first, in the new, strange place; did not like the milk and water, and strongly objected to having the pudding

before the meat ; but he bore all in silent shyness, for well-nigh four-and-twenty hours.

It so happened that the mistress of the school and her two daughters were the grand managers of all things ; the lady's husband, a fine old refugee from the Rhenish provinces of France, whose name had probably been originally Schweinfurth, taking no part therein, and spending his day either in composing a never-ending book, playing on the piano, or cutting out cork models. His fine, polished, bald head, when occasionally seen, had some reverence in the eyes of Julian Ludlow ; but it was rarely visible in the school-room. There Julian soon became familiar with a new scene, and new companions ; and he set to work forthwith to show his contempt of petticoat government. Five times in one day, he was told not to " be bold," and he was all the bolder. Correction, however, came at length, very much to his surprise ; and, not liking the first touch of

a cane, he would certainly have walked out of the door, and taken his way homeward, had he not been very well watched. The mistress, however, remarked, that, though he winced, he did not cry at the cane, but stamped his little foot, and boldly called her "an ugly old thing," (which was very true, by the way) and set the whole class tittering.

His residence there, however, did him good : it brought him into some sort of subjection ; it taught him, experimentally, that everything in the world was not made for his pleasure, and that it was well to listen to reason, rather than submit to punishment. His impetuosity was somewhat diminished ; and, by mingled reason and firmness, (for she was really a clever woman) Mrs. Swanforth would probably have taught him spontaneously to govern his impulses, had not an event occurred which finally broke up the school.

Julian had been there about eighteen months, and had just returned after what

the holiday letters call "the Easter recess." Mr. Swanforth had received him with great kindness, and patted his curly head as he entered, saying—"I wish I had dat vig on my bare pole," which the little boy understood to be a compliment. Bed time soon came, and the little boys underwent the agonies of washing and being put to bed; but Julian could not get to sleep. He generally, indeed, had a restless night after his return from home; for, in spite of all that could be said, he thought school a very uncomfortable place indeed. As, on this occasion, he lay tossing about, and kicking the bed clothes off him—for the night was a warm one—he heard a good deal of running about, and the opening and shutting of doors, and a carriage drive up; and then, thinking that he heard a sound of sobbing and lamentation, he judged, of course, that it was a new boy come, much against his will and consent.

All was soon still again, however; and,

amidst snatches of broken sleep, Julian passed the night.

It was usual for one of the young ladies, Mrs. Swanforth's daughters, to wake the little boys; but on this morning a servant-maid presented herself instead—a smooth-cheeked, bright-haired, pretty-eyed girl, an especial favourite of Julian's, whom they called "Little Anne," to distinguish her, of course, from big Anne. Dear little Anne! how well I remember you! Julian instantly sprang out of bed and leaped upon her neck; but the girl held up her hand with a monitory gesture, and said, in a sad tone—

"Hush, my dear, hush! Don't make any noise to-day; for there is sorrow in the house. Poor Mr. Swanforth is dead."

"Dead!" echoed Julian, with wonder and terror in his eyes. "Why, I saw him last night. I thought people were a long time dying."

"He died suddenly, my dear," replied little Anne. "You had hardly gone to bed

when he was seized with gout in the stomach ; and before the doctor could come, he was a corpse, poor man ! So you must be very quiet, Julian dear, and not speak a word above a whisper ; for Mrs. Swanforth is very sad and very sorry.”

“ And so am I,” said Julian, and so he was ; and, during the whole morning, he went about the house quiet, and melancholy, and hardly saying anything. It was the first time that the idea of death had been brought home to him. He had heard of people dying, and of their being dead, and understood that their friends would see them no more ; but they had been persons of whom he knew little, and if they had only gone into the neighbouring county, he would not have thought less of their departure. But here, death was close to him—in the very house with him—he knew the chamber where it must be ; and he wondered what sort of a thing it was ; but, at the same time, the silence, and the gloom, and the half-closed shutters,

made him feel that it must be something very terrible.

All this had a great effect upon the boy's imagination. It seemed to him as if the Spirit of Death was in every desolate room—as if he felt its oppressive presence, its still and silent weight, as a load that he could not shake off, even with all the buoyancy of his young, gay heart. The impression was lasting, too: it sank deeply into his spirit; and very often that sad day would recur to his memory in after years, hardly diminished in effect, although by that time he had become more familiarly acquainted with the dark aspect of “the lean, abhorred monster.”

During the morning, the relations of many of the boys came and took them away, having received notice of the event; and, about three o'clock, Hal Ludlow appeared with the gig, and drove little Julian home again. For reasons of her own, Mrs. Swanforth determined to give up

keeping school, and Julian never saw either herself or her daughters any more.

Some short time passed ere a fresh school could be found to suit the taste of Mr. and Mrs. Ludlow, and of the Squire ; for not only was the latter consulted upon all the proceedings regarding Julian's education, but a sort of dictatorial power was attributed to him by Hal Ludlow, which the worthy old gentleman would never have assumed himself. During this interregnum, Julian Ludlow, as may be supposed, was a great deal at the Hall, where a young play-fellow, between three and four years old, was ever ready to gambol with him in the park, or in the drawing-room. No other child had as yet blessed the union of Julian Westwood and his sweet Margaret ; but their little girl had grown up with every infant grace and beauty, and her father had called her Mary in memory of the sister he had so dearly loved. He was of a contemplative and affectionate

disposition ; and his feelings very often, I might indeed say generally, got the better of his fore-sight. Thus he would stand and gaze by the hour upon the sports of Julian and his little daughter with unalloyed satisfaction, while his wife, though gentle and kind as a May morning, yet felt some little shadow of doubt fall upon her mind, as she saw the two children together, and observed their growing affection for each other, and let her eye run on into the future to discover what might be the result of such intimacy, if it were carried on into the after years of life. One little incident may be mentioned ; for, though it was but an accident, yet it had painful results, at an after period. Julian Ludlow had come up unexpectedly to the Hall, to convey a message to the young Squire. But his namesake was absent, and not expected to return for two or three days. Margaret went out into the park with the two children, and sat watching them as they played upon a patch of green sward

on the brow of a hawthorn glen, through which ran a little path. Suddenly, in the midst of their sports, a step was heard coming apparently from the house ; and, a moment after, Margaret, who had raised her eyes, saw her husband advancing towards them, with a look of great animation and pleasure. Little Julian looked up, almost at the same instant, and his face became radiant with joy, at the sight of his almost over kind friend.

But what called the colour so suddenly into Margaret's cheek ? At that moment, as the little boy looked at the man, and the man looked at his wife, with the same emotions of joy in the breast of each, a likeness so strong, so strange, so marvellous, appeared, that something like a pang shot through Margaret's heart. She banished such feelings, instantly ; she shrank from them, as from something base, and false, and evil ; and she resolved that they should never return : nor did they.

The next school to which Julian went,

was one of those to which the little fellows of the preparatory school had been accustomed to look forward with a certain degree of ambition, calling them "The big boys' schools ;" but even infant ambition has always its disappointment and its bitterness ; and Julian soon found that he had not entered an Elysium. Though little more than seven years old, when he went, he was a fine, well grown, bold boy.

He was at the bottom of the school, of course, and had to work his way up ; but his very childishness was some defence ; and though the lads nearest his own age, tried to bully him, of course, the bigger boys were inclined to take his part, whenever he could not take his own. This, however, he could generally do tolerably well ; and one or two successful battles with imps somewhat older than himself, established a tolerable position for him, amongst his school-fellows, at the expence of some black eyes and bloody noses.

Unfortunately for him, indeed, it happened that he very early gave offence to a school-fellow, originally two classes above him—a boy named Colefoxe, whom the other boys called “the baronet,” and who really was so ; his father having died early, and he having succeeded to a title and estate, and the indulgence of an indiscreet mother. Colefoxe was a strong, rather good-looking, exceedingly self-sufficient lad, with a very common mixture of conceit and dulness in his composition, which, though it made many of his companions look upon him with some degree of envy and admiration, did not at all help him on in the school. Julian Ludlow was possessed of a notion in which few of his school-fellows shared, namely, that he (Julian) was sent to school to learn something ; and, consequently, under this mistaken impression, he laboured hard and diligently, in all hours of study ; thinking, affectionately, how much pleasure it would give to his father and mother, to hear that he made good pro-

gress. Thus, though beginning so low down, he gradually made his way on, till he stood next to the young baronet; and then, much to Sir William Colefoxe's surprise and indignation, *took him down*, as it was termed at that school.

From that moment, the enmity between them was deepened. The young baronet lost no opportunity of mortifying Julian Ludlow: and, in the end, a battle ensued between the two boys, in which the elder and the stronger undoubtedly got the better, but could not drive little Julian to give in, and received, himself, a far severer bleeding than could have been anticipated from the size and years of his opponent. The interference of an usher put a stop to the fight, and, to say the truth, neither was very much inclined to renew it.

After this little event, young Colefoxe was more cautious in his dealings with Julian Ludlow; but still he never suffered any occasion to pass without saying something which implied an insult, although ge-

nerally veiled by a dirty equivoque. Julian bore this conduct with great patience for more than a year ; and was, perhaps, more galled by the assumption of superiority displayed towards him, on all occasions, by the young baronet, than he would have been even by offensive language. At the end of that time, however, it got about the school, by one of those mysterious processes which originate rumours, true and false, no one knows where or how, that the father of Julian was neither more nor less than a carpenter. The story buzzed about the school, like a blue-bottle fly, and Julian's ears could not fail to catch something of that which was said regarding himself. Poor boy ! he had a sleepless night of it.

By this time, he had been long enough at school to be well aware of all the follies, and vanities, and malice, and bad feeling, which bud and blossom in those hot-beds for human plants, where such frailties and vices are frequently nourished to premature and extraordinary luxuriance. Neverthe-

less, after some debate and hesitation in himself, he took a stout resolution to do what was manly and right. He could not be ashamed of his father or his mother for the life of him ; and why should he be ashamed of his father's trade ? It was an honest one, and honestly pursued ; and he determined to face the matter boldly, and, if asked, to tell the plain truth.

On the following day, he could evidently see that some arrangements were going on amongst the bigger boys, amongst whom the young baronet always played a conspicuous part, though he was now inferior to Julian in the school. After breakfast, when the boys generally assembled for half an hour's play outside the hall, a group of these bigger boys gathered in one corner, and, as Julian passed, called to him, and formed a sort of ring round him, out of which he could not escape.

" Pray, Ludlow," said the young baronet, who had evidently been selected as spokesman, " what may your father be ?"

The young boy's heart throbbed with indignation ; but he exercised more command over himself than he had ever done before, and replied, in a quiet but very distinct tone,

“ My father is a carpenter, Colefoxe.”

“ Call me Sir William Colefoxe, if you please,” said the insolent lad, with a contemptuous smile.

“ I shall do no such thing,” answered Julian. “ We are all equals here. There are no baronets amongst school-boys. Will you let me pass, Denison ? I have had enough of this.” And he pushed his way through the ring around him.

As he did so, however, the boy he called Denison—one of the three elder boys of the school—put his hand on his shoulder, saying aloud,

“ You are a fine little fellow, Julian Ludlow, and they shall not bully you.”

Julian could have cried ; but he would not allow himself to do so, and the matter passed off for some time. He could see, how-

ever, that, although some of his companions treated him with the same frank familiarity as ever, others had grown cold, and affected a sort of ridiculous distance of manner, which would only have moved the contempt of a grown man. It affected the boy a good deal, however, and he felt uneasy and depressed.

He was, one day, walking in a solitary part of the play-ground, which was separated from a shady lane by a bank surrounded by a tolerably tall pallisade—over which, by the way, the boys used to climb without ceremony when their ambition was too big for the bounds of the play-ground—and suddenly he was attracted by a call, not very loud, but clear and distinct enough, and, turning round sharply, he saw the head and shoulders of a well-dressed man, who, having climbed to the top of the bank, was looking over the pallisade. His hat was new and glossy ; a large pair of black whiskers covered his cheeks ; and an enormous pair of moustachios, of the same

hue, apparent on his upper lip, gave Julian a vague idea of having seen him somewhere not long before. Boys' memories are not very tenacious of faces, however; and Julian was puzzling himself to discover where he had beheld the one now before him, when the gentleman called to him again, this time addressing him by name.

"Julian! Julian Ludlow!" he said. "Come hither: I want to speak to you: I am in great haste; so, if you don't come quick, presto, I must be gone."

The words "quick, presto," were to Julian the "open sessame" of the door of memory; and Doctor Pequinillo stood before him, arrayed in profound wig, and a black velvet jacket. He ran up joyfully to the fence, and shook hands with the Conjuror, over the paling, saying,

"I did not know you at first, sir."

"No, because you are four years older; and I have got on another wig," said Kit Markus. "Never depend upon wigs, smiles, or professions, Julian. They are

all false and deceitful things, and men never use them when they have not something to conceal. But how are you getting on, my boy? I have been down to see Hal Ludlow and Emma, and I promised them to look in as I went by; but I was detained for half an hour, demonstrating to a countryman that half-a-crown put into a basin of water became two half-crowns. —How do you like your school? I am in a great hurry, so you must speak fast.”

It struck strangely upon Julian's ear, to hear his father and mother called Hal Ludlow and Emma; but as the face and voice of the conjuror brought back to his mind home-scenes, and those sweet associations which open the gates of the heart, he poured upon good Doctor Pequinillo his tale of the annoyances and indignities he had lately suffered.

“So you told them you were the son of a carpenter?” said the Doctor, with a laugh. “That was very right, but very foolish, Julian: it's a wise father who knows his

own son, and a wiser son who knows his own father. Why, your father may be a Prince, in disguise, for aught you know. If ever any one asks you an impertinent question, answer—‘ You don’t know : there are mysteries in all things.’ And so this Colefoxe teases you? Well, he’ll go on, I dare say. You must have something ready for him : something he won’t like. Don’t answer hastily ; but take a minute to consider what you say, and then say it coolly. Nothing puzzles a man so much as that ; and when he finds that you can play at teasing *him*, he’ll leave off teasing *you*. Ask him if his name wasn’t once Oldfox, or Coldfox, or some other nasty, stinking vermin, and if he has not changed it, to get rid of the bad savour. At all events, give him back something bitter. But now I must be off. There’s a half-guinea your mother sent you.”

And away went Kit Markus, to seek his horse, which was tied at the end of the lane.

Julian Ludlow thought the Doctor's advice very good in regard to his enemy Colefoxe ; but nearly a month passed before he had an opportunity of acting upon it. In the end, however, it was serviceable ; for the boy was quick, more mature of intellect than his years foreboded, and perfectly fearless of consequences.

A lady and gentleman, on one half-holiday, when a great number of the boys were out on leave, came to visit young Denison, to whom they were related, and Sir William Colefoxe, whose mother they knew. With these two boys, they walked over the house, and through the playground, where the lady's eye was attracted by the beauty and gentlemanly look of Julian Ludlow.

"Who is that little fellow," she asked, "with that splendid curling hair?"

"He is as fine a little fellow as ever lived," replied Denison.

"He's quite a young Cupid," rejoined the

lady, who was a fashionable woman. "Do call him up, Henry, and let me speak with him."

"Here, Julian—Julian Ludlow!" cried Denison. "Lady Daynton wishes to speak to you."

Julian walked up gracefully enough; and, in a minute, the lady's fingers were separating the tangles of his hair. Two or three of the upper boys gathered round; and it need hardly be said that the kindness and familiarity with which the fine lady treated Julian Ludlow, were gall and wormwood to Sir William Colefoxe. He determined that Julian should have a dose of the same, and, taking advantage of the first pause, as they stood and chatted at the edge of the playground, he said, in an easy though somewhat swaggering tone—

"By the way, Julian, what did you tell me your father was?"

"A carpenter," replied Julian, with his eyes flashing.

"Pity he didn't make you one!" exclaimed the young baronet, with a look of haughty scorn.

But Julian had recovered himself. He recollected the advice he had received. He saw his opportunity, and seized it.

"As you are so curious about my father," he rejoined, boldly, before the whole party, "pray what was yours, Colefoxe?"

"My father was a gentleman, to be sure," replied the young baronet.

"Pity he didn't make you one," retorted Julian.

Colefoxe sprang at him like a tiger; but Denison caught him by the collar, and threw him unceremoniously back, while Lady Daynton and her husband laughed till they wept; and the lady, taking Julian by the hand, said—

"Come along, my little fellow. You have just answered him as he deserves. You shall go round with us. Don't you let Colefoxe maltreat him, Henry."

“If he does, I’ll give him a good licking,” replied Denison.

And thus ended Julian Ludlow’s principal annoyances at school; for the holidays were now fast approaching, and Colefoxe did not return after they were over, probably from his own representation to a weak mother, that it was improper he should continue at a school where the son of a carpenter was admitted.

CHAPTER VII.

VERY nearly the third of a volume, written upon the nine or ten first years of a boy's life ! It is time to turn over a new leaf, reader, in more senses of the words than one ; and yet those ten first years, which here occupy about the ninth part of a book like this, not only form the seventh part of any ordinary life, but the most important seventh part of the whole. We might almost say, that upon them depends man's destiny—not directly, indeed, but indirectly. Upon them depends his character, which, nine times out of ten, works out his destiny. Upon them depends his direction—

his line—his course of thought, of feeling, and of action. There is the central starting point, from which a thousand roads diverge; and the one he chooses at that spot, leads him farther and farther from all others as he travels towards some point in the wide bounding circle where terminate all the paths of life. Accidents may happen to impede his course: hill and dale may intervene: rivers may have to be forded, or bridged: dark and tangled mazes may have to be traversed; but onward, onward goes the road, from the one point to the other, in the direction that it first receives.

We have spoken of Julian Ludlow's school days, and we may now add a few words—a very few—upon his holidays. About one fourth part of the time of his absence from school, was regularly spent at the Hall, and no diminution of favor or affection took place in regard to Julian Ludlow. He was still a great favorite with young Mistress Westwood: he was still

the pet of her husband ; and many a gay ride would the two Julians take together ; the one mounted on a hunter, the other on a smart pony, whose shorter legs, by doubling their steps, contrived, easily enough, to keep up with the longer legged animal.

Moreover, Julian rose higher and higher, each day, in the good opinion of the Squire. The elder Mr. Westwood saw that the effect of the school upon him, had been entirely favourable : he had lost none of his straight-forward frankness ; none of that bold, fearless, yet not saucy, confidence, which is a characteristic of the well-bred English lad. And yet he was a good deal softened. The impetuosity, the petulance, if you will, of the boy, was under more restraint. He was more patient at disappointment, less eager in pursuit, more considerate of the wishes and feelings and opinions of others. Towards the Squire himself, he was affectionately respectful, without being, in the least degree, shy or timid ; and, when the old man encouraged

him, he would often tell, with an occasional glow in the cheek, which shewed that his frankness implied no want of modesty, all the little anecdotes or incidents of his school-boy life, watching with ready delicacy for the least appearance of weariness to break off his narrative.

The Squire was interested and pleased ; and he found, moreover, that Julian's time had not been wasted in his more studious hours ; that his progress vindicated fully the opinion he had early entertained of his abilities ; and that, for a boy of ten years old, he had acquired a great deal more, and more fully understood what he had acquired, than one boy in a thousand.

There is something very interesting—nay, very refreshing—to an old man in the prattle of the young. To men of middle life, it is often wearisome : they live in the present ; their vocation is activity ; they have nothing to do with hope or memory, except to borrow, from the one, light on the path of ambition, and, from the other, the

guidance of experience. But age is the time of memory ; and all that recalls early days and pleasant scenes, passed away for ever, is very sweet—is very refreshing : it is the young air of spring to the senses of an invalid. Nothing can do this so powerfully, so sweetly, as intercourse with a child.

Old Mr. Westwood needed that refreshment, too, as much as any man ; for his spirits had never recovered their tone since the death of his daughter, and many of the hours which he passed in voluntary solitude, were very heavy hours indeed. Often, when Julian was with him—and, sometimes, the boy would remain in the library for more than an hour, reading, or amusing himself in some other way, in silence—Mr. Westwood would gaze at him with a sort of scrutinizing and even anxious look ; as if he were seeking to read, in the boy's features and expression, some truthful indications of his character, or some prognostics of his future fate. It always seemed that the

result was satisfactory to him, although very often, after Julian left him, he would fall into deeper melancholy than ever, as if, when the rousing influence was gone, the re-action was greater than the first effect.

Julian's chief companion, however, was the little girl, Mary, now grown into a lovely sylph of about six years old. Endless were the sports of these children, endless their amusements, infinite the affection which they entertained for each other ; and when Julian went back to school, Mary always cried bitterly ; and I believe Julian would have cried himself at the parting with her, or at her tears, had he not been a boy, and ashamed.

Thus passed by his very early years. At twelve, he was removed to a public school — better than any private one in many respects, but yet a place of great danger, and very often of many evil influences to a young and unprepared mind. Nevertheless, Julian passed on through temptations

and difficulties, without any great harm done. He knew he had a reputation to establish—a name, a fortune, and a fate to make; and he determined that his advance should be as rapid as possible, so far as it depended upon himself, lest the golden prizes, of which he frequently dreamed, should be seized by others.

The well known course of a public school, especially in that day, requires no great detail here. Julian perhaps was somewhat fortunate in his companions—fortunate in those above him, fortunate in those below him; and the masters also happened to be peculiarly well chosen, judicious, and gentlemanly men. His earnest application to his studies first attracted attention; and, without anything like favoritism, he soon won approbation. He became distinguished in the school: proceeded through all the forms; and ultimately found himself possessed of a scholarship which, in due course, led him to a distinguished College at Oxford.

None more sincerely rejoiced at his young protégé's success than good Squire Westwood, and none less selfishly rejoiced ; but Julian, who had been made acquainted with the fact that the expenses of his education were entirely defrayed by this old patron of his family, determined at once upon his conduct, as soon as he found that the great exertions he had made, and the success he had obtained, put him in possession of an independent income.

He was hardly more than eighteen years of age, and the severe study of the last two years had somewhat affected his health ; but he was still an exceedingly handsome lad, tall, well-proportioned, and of a countenance which had gained rather than lost, not only by the thoughtful expression which had come upon it, but by a certain delicacy of hue, which had succeeded the ruddy brown of his early years. At the very first vacation, he hurried down to Waldon, and spent the afternoon with his father and mother : the one become a portly

man of the middle age, and well to do in the world; the other, a still pretty and interesting woman of seven or eight and thirty: and on the next morning, at an hour when he knew he should find the Squire at home, he walked up to the Hall to fulfil his resolution.

Squire Westwood was an old man now. He was about fifty-five when he was first introduced to the reader. Eighteen years have since passed, and that makes seventy three, if I mistake not. It is a heavy weight to bear, seventy-three years piled on us one by one. Heavens! how we bound away under the light load of the first thirty! Then, how stoutly we walk on under the next ten! We fancy we could carry a dozen more with ease; yet we begin to find that each one galls our shoulder a little; and the last thirty bear us down, down, down. They seem so rapid in their coming, too. The interval between each additional burden and the one that went before, seems abridged.

The first ten of that thirty, we bear with patience. For the next ten we must call upon resolution to help us; and it is but staggering work under the last decade. At least, it is so with most men ; but there are exceptions, and Mr. Westwood was one of these. It is but a selfish prayer, after all, when we pray for temperance, soberness, and chastity. We are only asking for health and long life ; and, as the petition in this respect of Mr. Westwood had been granted, he bore his years more lightly than most men, although grief had had some effect upon him. He had never forgotten his poor Mary.

It struck Julian Ludlow, when admitted to his library, that he had grown marvelously thin ; but that was the only change he perceived in him. During the last ten years, not a black hair could have been perceived through the powder which he wore; and therefore there was no change in this respect. No difference was to be perceived in the clearness of his eyes,

although a stronger pair of spectacles had become absolutely necessary. His front teeth, too, were still white and good. The mind was as little impaired as the body, or less indeed. It wanted no stronger spectacles: well-regulated affections—the just balance he had maintained through life between judgment and feeling—had preserved the heart unshrivelled even by the power of age. Reader, say not this character is overdrawn. I have him before the eye of memory now, as he lived and as he died.

“Ah, Julian!” said the old gentleman, extending his hand towards him without rising, “I am glad to see you, my dear boy, and I congratulate you with all my heart upon your late successes. Your career has been an honour and a pleasure to us all—a pleasure to your family and your friends, an honour to them, and to your native place.”

“If I have done well, sir,” replied Julian, standing by the old man’s chair, “it is you

I have to thank for it—first, for giving me the means, and secondly, for giving me the motive for doing well ; and I will confess that it was one of the proudest and happiest days of my life, when I found that, by my own exertions, with your aid, I had won a little independence for myself, and believed that you would approve of my conduct.”

He was hurrying on to his object at once; but the old gentleman interrupted him, saying—

“Sit down, Julian—sit down, and tell me all about it.” And he proceeded to question him upon his College life, and all its details, with a great deal of interest.

Julian answered willingly, for he had nothing to conceal ; but at length Mr. Westwood proposed to go and join his daughter-in-law and grand-daughter in the drawing-room ; and then Julian, with some hesitation, for the delay had unnerved him a little, came to the point.

"I want to speak with you, sir, for one moment first," he said. And Mr. Westwood who had risen, sat down again.

"My father has told me, sir," he continued, "of your very great kindness in defraying all the expences of my education, and not even allowing him to touch the interest of the thousand pounds which I also owe to the generosity of your family. I am deeply grateful; but, at the same time, I should think it very wrong to continue to trespass on your bounty, now that I have means of maintaining myself."

"My dear Julian," returned the old man, taking his hand, and pressing it kindly, "you do not know all the calls that may come upon you. Your little income will not be sufficient to maintain you in the position in which you are placed."

"I have lived within it for the last four months, sir," observed Julian; "and I should really think it a robbery of others, who may more need your bounty, were I to continue dependent on it longer."

“That is nonsense, Julian,” rejoined the old man. “Now tell me, what you have got?”

“My studentship, I find, returns a somewhat varying income,” returned Julian; “but it is never less than ninety pounds, I am told, and sometimes much more.”

“A bad sort of income, a varying one,” said Mr. Westwood, “especially for a studious man.”

“Besides that, however,” pursued Julian, “I have the interest of the thousand pounds, and the interest which has accumulated, which together, my father says, yield nearly eighty pounds per annum. So you see, sir, that I have quite enough.”

“I do not, indeed,” said Mr. Westwood. “I know that I spent much more myself at College; and though I would not encourage any extravagant habits, yet there are many contingencies, which you cannot foresee, that may require greater expense than you now calculate upon. But, putting all that aside, let us take a different view of

the case. You are my god-son, you know, and I very early determined what I would do for you. I told your father, long ago, that I would defray the expenses of your education, till you took your degree. That was what I told him ; but I did not say I would do no more. However, you must let me fulfil my promise ; for I can see no cause in your having amply justified my regard for you, to withdraw from what I undertook. This is one view of the case, my dear boy ; but there is another which binds me to you by stronger bonds even than my sponsorship. You were very dear, Julian, to a beloved child whom I have lost. Your mother was dear to her, too ; and you and your mother were the last persons, except her own immediate family, who were admitted to the bed-side of death. She loved you very much, Julian, though you cannot be expected to remember her."

"I remember her quite well, sir," declared Julian. "I remember sitting upon

her knee, with her arms round me, in that very chair by the window."

"Do you?" exclaimed the old man, in a tone full of emotion. "Then say not another word, my dear boy, upon pecuniary obligations between you and me.—Now come, let us go and join Margaret and *her* Mary. My son is in London; but he will be back to-morrow."

Any one who has watched the blossoming of a rose tree, must have noticed that there is one particular period at which a bud—merely a bud, shewing nothing but the fringed loveliness of the green calyx, with a gleam of pink here and there, between the folds—suddenly bursts forth (very often in a single night,) into a more mature stage of beauty; and, though still only partially blown, the rose is, perhaps, in its fairest stage of all—the tenderness of infancy still lingering about it, the brightness of its prime shadowed forth in its early blush, and the tender perfume breathing forth from the innermost depths of the young

blossom. Such seemed, to the eyes of Julian Ludlow, the change which had taken place in Mary Westwood, since they had met six months before. For a time, the beauty which she had early promised, had seemed obscured and dimmed. She had always been charming to him ; for she had been always natural, frank, and graceful—his playmate, his friend, almost his sister. But now, though still a mere girl in years, she seemed to have become a young woman in six months ; and beauties were developed, which had lain hid : the features were all refined and softened : the eyes were more bright, yet not less tender : the complexion was clear and warm : the form was expanding into rich loveliness, without having lost one of the graces of childhood.

“ Here is our young Collegian,” said old Mr. Westwood, entering.

Mary instantly started up, and held out both her hands to him. Mistress Westwood received him frankly and kindly ; but there was another lady in the room, whom

Julian afterwards discovered to be the governess, and who looked somewhat grave; and, after the first gratulations were over, she whispered a word in Mary's ear, which called the colour into her cheek.

Foolish governess! You are putting things into the girl's head that never would get there unless some one helped them.

Mistress Westwood herself was an amiable, a gentle, and a sensible person, as we have already represented her; but had she wanted a duenna, or a dragon, she could not have been better suited than in the governess she had chosen. A very unfortunate error in young ladies, educated for that most painful and difficult situation, too often prevents them from discriminating the line of lady-like propriety, lying between careless familiarity, and uneasy primness of manners. Their influence is brought to bear, at a period when young girls have already received a certain bent and direction of mind—certain habits, even of demeanour; and, in their endeavours to

force the young plant into a new and rigid form, they succeed, perhaps, for a time, or while their own presence maintains the restraint, only to let the branches and tendrils burst forth rather too profusely when the frame-work is withdrawn. Or if they succeed, to use the words of a famous speaker upon education, in dissolving, as it were, the character of their pupil, and again congealing it upon a new point of crystalization, the form which it assumes wants the beauty and the grace of Nature: it is a factitious stone, and not a real diamond. Give me the person who can cut and polish the gem, and not her who endeavours to alter its character.

Miss Meelybones, however, was one who believed that manner was one of the exact sciences, and she would have reduced every look and gesture to a precise rule. Doubtless she was a very good person; doubtless, she was a very well-informed person; but she was the most disagreeable person in modern Europe, and the least

fitted on earth to have the charge of a young, frank, open-hearted girl. Moreover, both Julian Westwood and his wife felt that such was the case. Julian Westwood, very shortly after her entrance into the family, which was of course by the recommendation of a distinguished friend, remarked to his wife that he did not know how it might do in the school-room, but he would advise her not to let Miss Meelybones into the dairy.

“Why?” asked Margaret, in her simplicity.

“Rennet, my love, rennet,” replied her husband. “The very look of her face would supply the whole parish with curds and whey; and take care, my dear Maggy, that the milk of human kindness in our Mary’s heart is not turned sour in the process.”

Mistress Westwood thought over his words, and determined that the arrangement should not last long; but she was considerate, and of that truly Christian

turn of mind which examines closely how any meditated act may affect others. She thought that any abrupt dismissal of the governess, however necessary, might produce more evil to her than was required by the occasion ; and thus the matter hung in suspense, when Ludlow Julian arrived, and Mary met an undertoned but severe rebuke for the warmth with which she greeted the play-fellow of her childhood.

Julian saw that something was wrong, but he knew not what ; and yet he felt that he himself was in some degree connected with the little embarrassment of the moment. Mistress Westwood perceived and understood the whole affair ; and it suggested thoughts to her mind—considerations, calculations, forecastes—all very simple, yet not altogether without their anxieties and troubles. She was not a worldly-wise woman, but she was not without prudence. She was not a person bound down by conventionalities ; yet she had a regard for the rules, and even

opinions of society. She was not by any means a haughty woman ; but she had that portion of pride which is required and sanctioned by the customs of her country—which is not alone an acquired feeling, but founded upon instincts, existing as powerfully in democracies as in aristocracies. The thought flashed across her mind once more, of her daughter falling in love with, and marrying, a carpenter's son. Was she very wrong in feeling a strong repugnance to such a consummation ?

But there was something more—something which I cannot define, describe or analyze, because she could not define, and would not analyze it herself. She was not in the least a suspicious woman. She loved, trusted and admired her husband. She felt confident that Emma Ludlow was good and virtuous ; and yet the strange occasional likeness already indicated between Julian Westwood and Julian Ludlow, could not escape observation. It *would* come. It was like one of

those strange intrusions of a dissonant idea—suggestions of the devil himself—that sometimes cross us in places and at times when their presence is most repugnant—in our prayers—at the altar—in the church—in the closet—when we are offering thanks or praise—when we are begging mercy and forgiveness—when we are schooling our own heart—when we are bending it before our God. She would not suffer it to rest upon her mind however. She drove it from her, welcomed Julian as kindly as ever, and joined in asking him to stay the day.

Old Mr. Westwood perceived nothing of all that had taken place, except, indeed, that his fair daughter-in-law had once turned a little pale, and passed her hands across her eyes, as if to drive something away from her sight ; but, having a great and permanent abhorrence of Miss Meelybones, he was anxious to get out of the room where she was, as soon as possible,

and merely asked Julian to stay and dine, adding,

“You can take a gun, and get one of the keepers to go and shoot with you, if you find the day hang heavily, Julian.”

“There is no fear of that, Sir,” observed the young scholar; “but I think, as I only returned yesterday evening, I ought to spend to-day with my father and mother. They have not heard half I have to tell, yet, and all the incidents of College life are new to them.”

“Well, then, come to-morrow,” said the old Squire. “Come early, and shoot me some partridges. My son will be back about two, and will be very glad to see you.”

Julian Ludlow returned on the following day; and, in spite of all Miss Meelybones could do, Mary and he were alone together more than once in the course of the morning. As soon as the bridle is out of the mouth, of course young horses will

run away ; and when Mistress Westwood, who was not very well, sent for the governess to her own room for a few minutes, the two young people, left together, scampered off upon old tracks—I mean mentally—and were soon in full course of affection and intimacy, as in days of old. It was “Mary” and “Julian,” again, or “dear Mary,” and “dear Julian;” and, knowing that they should have very little time, they of course crammed as much into it as possible ; so that all which the very respectable governess had effected, was to establish a sort of new and secret understanding between them, where everything before had been as broad and open as the daylight.

They did not make love, or talk of love, or think of love. Lord bless you, honest-hearted reader ! they never dreamt of such a thing. They felt like brother and sister : they had always felt so ; and no change had come yet. But they talked Miss Meelybones over very well ; and

Mary's account of her. did not at all soften the picture which Julian's observation had drawn.

At the hour of two, the young Squire arrived; and the warmth and affectionate earnestness with which he greeted the student, and congratulated him upon his success, with eyes sparkling almost to tears, confounded, dumbfounded, and thunderstruck Miss Meelybones. Suddenly, some new light seemed to break in upon her; and, with all her prudence, she said "Oh," aloud, when nobody was speaking to her. It was evident that she had been speaking to herself, and, moreover, had convinced herself of something; which was a thing which nobody else had ever been able to do.

Nevertheless, although she tried a great deal to be more civil to Julian—for these prim pieces of precision are generally great curryers of favour—she was as disagreeable to him as she could be. There are persons whose politeness is abhorrent.

However, Miss Meelybones had quite made up her mind; and, in a letter which she wrote that night, to a lady well-suited for her friendship, giving an account of her situation at the time, she said that Mr. Westwood, junior, she believed, had been rather a gay man in his early days, and had had his peccadilloes ; but that Mistress Westwood was the most meek, benevolent, and forgiving woman in the world, especially towards the foibles of her husband.

CHAPTER VIII.

IF life has its epocha, so has youth ; and we must hasten from one to another, in the days of Julian Ludlow. Let us pass over a little more than two years of the time spent in college, and take up his history again when he was approaching that term so much desired in youth, of one and twenty — manhood — law-confirmed manhood. And yet how many are men at an earlier period, and how many are never men at all !

Julian studied hard and successfully.

His vacations were regularly spent at Waldon. He had not means for dissipation ; and, what was better still, he had not the inclination ; although, of course, he fell into some faults and errors which an ardent temperament, and an impetuous spirit, could not well escape. A high sense of honour, however—that sense which teaches us to hold steady in view, what is due to those who are kind to us—guarded him against any serious evils. If he was tempted—if he yielded to a certain degree,—he always recollected in time the exertions which his father had made to advance him in life, and the generous assistance which had been afforded by old Squire Westwood. He asked himself what conduct they would expect from him ; and he did his best to act up to their expectations.

In the meanwhile, the Squire had grown visibly older, and shadows were cast from the time that was coming. He became somewhat deaf, and reading grew a fatigue

to him. He did not walk so upright, or with so stout a step. He mounted his horse more slowly; and, as he sat, he was a good deal bent.

Mistress Westwood appeared to Julian, on his last two visits, somewhat delicate in health ; but the young Squire was as robust, and active, and cheerful as ever. Though Mary was now an exceedingly beautiful young woman, her conduct towards Julian was hardly altered. Once or twice, indeed, he thought that there was the least possible shade of reserve in her manner. It lasted but a moment, and was swept away with the rapidity of a cloud shadow in the summer. Sometimes, too, when they were alone, and talking together — talking eagerly, affectionately, with open and overflowing hearts—the colour would suddenly mount up into Mary's cheek, Julian knew not why ; nor did Mary know why either. She did not try to fathom the source whence such bubbles spring. She was wise. No young heart

ought to try to plumb them, lest it should trouble the waters.

Miss Meelybones had, by this time, departed from the Hall. She had left it with a good deal of undignified dignity; and from Mary, Julian learned that her going had been accelerated by the strong decision of the young Squire, who, Miss Meelybones declared, was not capable of appreciating her, or of being sensible of her services. Julian Westwood managed the matter so, however, as to make the act apparently voluntarily on the part of Miss Meelybones. After announcing his determination to his wife, he sought an interview with the lady—young by courtesy, though she was forty seven, and owned to eight-and-thirty. He was resolved to lay a broad basis for operations, and he consequently objected at once to her whole system of education and discipline, and begged that she would change it entirely in regard to his daughter. Miss Meelybones was sufficiently "dragonish" to

make a fight for her principles, and declared that they were founded upon immutable opinions of right and wrong.

“In those circumstances,” replied the young Squire, “I see but one thing that can be done, Miss Meelybones ; and I beg that you will announce your determination to Mistress Westwood.”

Hurried away by indignation, the lady flew to make a declaration of which she soon repented ; for she had miscalculated Margaret’s strength of mind. It was quite sufficient to bear the agony of her loss ; and, after quietly remarking upon the sharp terms in which the lady thought fit to speak of Mr. Westwood’s interference in the education of his own daughter, she accepted her resignation, with a coolness that had a very petrifying effect upon the current of Miss Meelybones’ vehemence. Four-and-twenty hour’s calm consideration brought repentance and apology, with an offer of submission to Mr. Westwood’s views. But Mistress Westwood replied, that un-

willing and unconvinced concession, in a matter so delicate, would not be what her husband desired; and that, after Miss Meelybones' plain declarations upon the subject, and her long experience in tuition, it could not be supposed that conviction had operated, and her opinions changed in one night. Thereupon, the lady, finding that the case was decided against her, relapsed into indignation again, and went away from the Hall with a profound contempt for all its inmates, and a deeper depth of pity for the unfortunate girl who was destined to be brought up as her father and mother pleased.

Her absence was a relief to all ; but, during his last two visits to the Hall, Julian certainly saw less of Mary alone than he had done on any previous occasion. Mistress Westwood was more frequently with them ; and a certain sort of effort to be so, betrayed itself to the eyes of Mary, at least—for the reproofs of Miss Meelybones had acted as suggestions, and put her

mind on the right track. Julian remarked nothing, except that Mistress Westwood was more fond of walking in the park, and driving or riding through the country round, than she had ever been before—more, indeed, than her strength seemed to warrant. The truth was, that, though she did not choose to deprive Mary of the exercise or amusement she was accustomed to enjoy, she thought it better to be as much as possible with her when Julian Ludlow was present.

Even the most sensible are often influenced, more or less, by the opinions they despise and the gossip they condemn; and, by this time, the neighbouring gentry were beginning to busy themselves a good deal with Julian Ludlow's somewhat anomalous position. It was, indeed, anomalous in English society, and especially in that part of the country; for, although something similar has probably occurred within the cognizance of us all, yet this has not been frequently, and no instance

had been known in Waldon and its neighbourhood. That the son of the village carpenter, while spending a month or six weeks at his father's house, should be the frequent and the favorite guest in the mansion of one of the oldest and best families of the county; that he should be the companion of the daughter, and treated like a son or a brother by the whole family, might well cause a little commotion. People dealt with the matter as their characters directed. Some of the old gentlemen and ladies who had been accustomed to see Julian at the Hall from his childhood, and who had learned by age and experience that it is better to let all persons manage their own business as they think best, treated Julian frankly and kindly whenever they met him, and made no comments, or very light ones. A younger, but still not young, generation—especially where there were marriageable daughters in the house—were exceedingly indignant, however. Some showed themselves cold

and distant when they saw Julian Ludlow; and some, who had risen a generation or two before from the dregs of the people, declared it was too bad to force such a person into society, and vowed they would cut him. They did not exactly keep their word, but they made themselves sufficiently disagreeable.

Julian began to find his own position unpleasant. There were indications, which he could not mistake, of his being looked down upon; and, as his old impetuosity of disposition had not yet been driven out of him, his spirit began to boil at the covert indignities which occasionally he had to encounter. He felt that, as far as the gifts of nature were concerned, he was equal or superior to those who scorned him; and that in courage, in talent, in knowledge, in honor, he might fearlessly place himself by the side of any for comparison. He might, very likely, have got into a quarrel with some of the young men who presumed a little too far upon their

gentle birth ; for he was hot and fiery enough ; but consideration for Mr. Westwood restrained him in some degree, and in general the offensive matter was not very tangible, being confined to a sort of supercilious coldness, and affectation of deafness when he spoke, and a studied silence towards him, which could not be taken notice of.

Some short time before the long vacation, however, when he was just one-and-twenty years of age, a circumstance occurred which gave him some relief, and which changed a good deal the current of his fate. There was a young gentleman at the University with him, and at the same College, with whom a good deal of intimacy had sprung up. He was of the same age as Julian ; but had matriculated a year after, and was far behind him in attainments. He was the only surviving son of a very old and ever respectable English family—one of the untitled nobility

of England—amiable in disposition, but not very brilliant in mind. Marmaduke Knight was within a month or two of coming of age ; but still he relied, almost as a child, upon the direction of his widowed mother ; and, when seized, about this time, with an inclination to make a tour upon the continent during the long vacation, he wrote to her for permission, expressing a strong desire to take Julian with him, as a sort of travelling tutor. His mother was a woman of strong good sense ; and, before she replied, she consulted the Dean, with whom she was personally acquainted. Julian received the very highest recommendation, and the matter was soon arranged to her son's satisfaction. He was to pay the whole of the travelling expenses ; and Julian's only real task was to be that of counsellor and companion.

For one single day, he ran down to Waldon to take leave of his family and friends there, before he departed, and was

received with greater kindness and joy than ever ; but that brief stay was only memorable in his history from the fact of his then having, for the first time, perpetrated a piece of verse.

“I hear you write poetry, Julian,” said old Mr. Westwood, “and I have a book” (Albums were then hardly invented) “in which some of my friends, at different times, have written a little something as a memorial. I am an old man, now, and, many of those who have written in that book are gone ; so that it is somewhat like a church-yard, full of mementos of the dead. But come, Julian ; you shall write me something before you go—even if it be my epitaph.”

“I never wrote a line of English poetry in my life, sir,” replied Julian, “though I have written Latin verses enough. However, I will try.”

He sat down ; and, leaving him alone for a few minutes, Mr. Westwood found

written on the page when he returned, some verses which pleased the old man much. They were addressed

“ T O T H E O L D .

“ Health to the old in years, where’er they be !

When heart and mind, uninjured, still survive—
When, on their brow, though winter we may see,
Summer within their breast is still alive.

Times’ saddest part is the dark gloom, oft cast

Upon bright spirits, leaving age all cold.
To those who bring their feelings from the past,
And teach youth’s better part, through age, to last —
Health to the old !

Their’s is the memory of well spent days—

The wide, calm glance on many a past-by year,
O’er which the light of fond remembrance plays,
Not the less bright for, here and there, a tear.
Wreath for their brow a chaplet of sweet flowers,
Which early midst the wintry snows unfold ;
And may they wear it through long sunny hours,
While many a friend cries, as the cup he pours,
Health to the old !”

Mr. Westwood carried off the verses immediately into the drawing-room, followed by Julian with somewhat of a glow upon his cheek ; and when the old man had read them aloud, in a fine voice, and with due emphasis, Mary started up, exclaiming —

“ Oh, write something for me, Julian. Write something for me.”

“ Give me till to-morrow,” replied Julian Ludlow, “ and I will do my best. The spring is only freshly opened, and the drops come slowly.”

“ But you are going to-morrow, you say,” answered Mary.

“ You shall have them, nevertheless,” said Julian.

And, on the following morning, a little packet lay on the breakfast-table near Mary's place. Mistress Westwood was the first at table, and she watched her daughter's face, when she took up the packet and read what it contained. Mary's color

varied a good deal ; but the moment after she had read, she handed the paper to her mother, who soon perceived that the emotions which the verses excited were not such as should give her any alarm.

“ In the deep moonlight, on a solemn cliff,
I sat, and sighed, and wondered if on earth
Men might behold the future days, and if
The manhood of the years, then in their birth,
Might be foreshewn by that same heavenly hand
That on the Median palace-wall displayed
The dreadful purport, the foregone command,
And Babylon dismayed.

On that same night, when all the earth and air
Seemed hushed, as listening for prophetic things,
And the pale beam, on ocean's glittering hair,
Quivered, as trembling with an Angel's wings—
I thought, and gazed, and from my eyes there seemed
To fall away a film, which, interposed,
My clay-bound soul from other spirits closed :
I slept not ; but I dreamed.

In a fair land, where clouds of lovely forms
Fluttered like butterflies in summer days—
Though, from the sky's dim verge, at times, fierce
storms,

Borne by the wind's wild coursers o'er the rays,
Came rushing up athwart the arch of heaven—

I seemed to stand ; and there an aged man,
With hair like snow, by blasts of winter driven,
To dig a pit began.

I watched him long, while he the mattock plied,
Unwearied and incessant, and flung forth
Shards, clay, and bones unnumbered ; and I cried,

' Who art thou, toilsome worker of the earth ?
And what this charnel that thou op'st amiss ?'

His hand paused not, but still a skull out-hurled,
The while he said, ' My name is Time ; and this,
The grave of all the world.'

' And must they all—the beautiful, the great,
The noble, and the wise—together fall ?

For this, do men take counsel against Fate—

To fill you loathsome pit ?' He answered, ' All !
Here agony and joy lie side by side :

This is earth's all !' I would have spoke ; but he
Frowned me to silence. ' Peace, vain worm !' he
cried ;

' There's room enough for thee !' "

Various comments were made on the little poem, as Julian Westwood read it aloud. Mistress Westwood said that it was somewhat rough and very sad. The young Squire remarked that it was not quite regular in the metre. His father merely said that the boy wrote well, and thought deeply for so young a lad. Mary said nothing. But the verses produced a certain melancholy upon her mind, which lasted throughout the day. The idea, too, that Julian was gone on his way to a foreign land, had something saddening in it, she could not tell why. He was not to be absent long—not much longer than usual; yet there was a vague sort of unpleasant feeling in the thought that seas were to roll between them, and a large addition of miles to interpose every day. Miss Meelybones was wise, as well as foolish—not an uncommon mixture in this world; and Mary was certainly thinking of Julian Ludlow, more than was absolutely neces-

sary, and perhaps more than her mother would have exactly liked.

Mistress Westwood, however, was not at that moment in a very observing mood. Though she bore up strongly—though she would not give way to her sensations, in the least—though she was regularly down to breakfast every day at the appointed hour, and went through all her duties cheerfully—she did not feel well. A languor was about her, a want of corporeal power and activity, which was only overruled by the earnestness and perseverance of the mind.

We must now, however, leave the family at the Hall, to pursue, for a short time, the wanderings of our Collegian.

CHAPTER IX.

FIVE-and-thirty years of peace have so be-travelled, and be-railroaded, and be-carpeted the world in which we live, that nobody can shew any man a new thing. Egypt and the Strand have somehow or other got into juxta-position. Syria lies close by Piccadilly. The State-house of New York and the Pyramids of Egypt are almost hand-in-hand; and a man, when he meditates a journey, asks himself, " Shall I go to the Peak of Derby, or take a look at Mount Sinai ?" Horeb is more familiar to a modern traveller than it was to Moses; and Pharaoh, if he had known as much as a lieutenant in the navy, need never have been drowned in the Red Sea.

But *couleur local* is very nearly gone, and imagination may as well be put at the bottom of the portmanteau ; for she has now nothing else to fill up. Standing at the farther end of that five-and-thirty years, it is hardly possible for any one, unless he actually saw it, to picture the state of Continental Europe immediately after the peace. Everything at that period, was un-Anglo-Saxon : the guinea in France was worth seven-and-twenty shillings : the floors of almost all the hotels were covered with brick, or marble, instead of wood : in many places, no such thing as a bell existed : carpets were matters of tradition ; and pig-tails and powder were still quite plentiful in the streets and houses of the French capital. Even Paris itself—Paris, the adopter and appropriator of everything discovered or perfected elsewhere—Paris, which is continually imitating or importing, while she thinks she is inventing and transmitting—Paris, where now nothing is to be seen but English thread, English black-

ing, English cotton—everything *à l'Anglaise*—was then a place completely *sui generis*, and, more especially and particularly, as unlike England as possible. In revenge for a sense of humiliation, the witty songsters of the French capital railed gaily at the hats of their triumphant guests, and at the red coats of the soldiery ; but, in spite of all that Beranger could write or sing, his countrymen, fond of novelty, and possessing the imitative faculties of the monkey, copied all they saw, and adopted, in many respects, the modes, the fashions, the follies, and even the hats, of their former enemies.

I can myself remember seeing men with sky-blue coats, pig-tails half-a-yard long, buckles in their shoes, knee-breeches and silk stockings, hopping about in the mud of the Parisian streets, then destitute of side pavements : and some who adhered to the habit of carrying what was intended to be put upon the head, under the arm.

But all such things soon passed away.

cigars, moustachios, carpets, and other conveniences have succeeded ; to say nothing of brutality, instead of courtesy, and Republican harshness instead of Imperial polish ; and I merely make the above observations, to show how completely new, fresh, and interesting, was everything on the Continent to the eyes of two young islanders, who visited it, for the first time, shortly after the signature of the last general peace. Everything around them, everything that met the ear, or assailed the nostrils, spoke of a foreign land : the smell of roasting-coffee, or of eaten garlic : the sight of long houses, dingy, and black, and gaunt, rising half-a-mile high : of porters carrying back-loads of bread, with garlands of the same around their arms : of perambulatory venders of lemonade : of lanterns and gutters, hanging and running in the middle of the street : of people sawing wood to the obstruction of all free passage : the sound of persons crying—“ Water t sell !” and many another cry be-

sides ; to say nothing of the universality of a foreign language, and the chattering tone in which it was spoken—all had strangeness, novelty, and, consequently, interest.

It is not, however, my intention here to write a guide-book, or a book of travels ; and I mention these particulars only to show effects produced upon the mind of Julian Ludlow and his young companion, Marmaduke Knight. Neither one nor the other had a single grain of experience to lend his fellow in case of need ; and Julian's only advantage was a certain degree of cool caution, which, notwithstanding his natural impetuosity, had been beaten into him in a somewhat painful manner, during his progress through school and college.

So charmed was the younger of the two, with all that he saw in Paris, that, had Julian been willing, he would very gladly have ended the tour there, and passed the whole of their allotted time in

the theatre, the *café*, or, perhaps, in a worse place. I do not mean to say that there was anything the least evil in the young man's disposition ; but he was very facile : Julian could not be always with him ; and, on one occasion, he was found by his friend in a certain saloon, where, amidst the best company of Paris, with everything that could stimulate man's natural desire for pleasure and love of excitement, were spread out various tables, some covered with parti-colored cloth, some hollowed out into the shape of a basin, round which were piled little heaps of gold, which changed hands with extraordinary rapidity. At one of these tables Mr. Knight was seated, when Julian, having learned his whereabouts, came in search of him. A pile of Napoleons, which, probably, had been larger, lay on his right hand ; and Julian soon perceived how matters were going.

“ I want to speak a word with you on

business," said the Julian Ludlow, speaking over his friend's shoulder, but addressing him in a commonplace tone.

"Well, wait a minute—only a minute," replied Marmaduke Knight. "This will be a famous *coup* for some one, and I will come as soon as it is settled."

The *coup* was soon settled, and the whole pile of gold disappeared from Marmaduke's right hand. He rose with a somewhat disconcerted air, and followed Julian out of the room, nearly forgetting to take his hat as he went.

"What is it, Ludlow?" he asked, in as easy a tone as he could assume.

"I want you to help me in getting everything ready for our departure to-morrow," said Julian, quietly. "You know to-morrow is the day fixed for leaving Paris."

"Hang it! that is awkward," ejaculated Marmaduke Knight. "Can't we stay another day or two?"

"Not if we are to make the tour proposed," replied Julian; "and, to tell you the truth, I think we had better not stay."

"Why not?" asked his young friend.

"Because," responded Julian, quietly, "I think if any man gets into a gambling-house in Paris, he has stayed a day too long."

"But that isn't a gambling-house—not a common gambling-house," replied Knight, somewhat sharply. "Why, I have lost two hundred Napoleons there, and I should like to win, at least, part of it back."

"You will only lose more," replied Julian. "You are mathematically disposed, Knight; and I can show you to a demonstration, that, in the end, the bank *must* be a winner. If that be the case, those who play against it must, as a whole, lose; and, therefore, that, on the best calculation of chances, every individual who plays, as they all play against the bank, must be a loser. However, as

we set out with certain fixed determinations as to where we should go, and as your whole plan was laid before your mother, and she expects us to follow it, I think it would hardly do to write and tell her that we were going to remain in Paris a little longer to win back two hundred Napoleons which you had lost at *rouge et noir*."

Knight bit his lip, but he made no further opposition ; and the horses being put to on the following morning, the friends rolled away upon that usual, and then almost invariable, road towards Italy, by Dijon and Switzerland,

To know a man well, you must travel with him. Surrounded by his own conventionalities, or the conventionalities of the society in which he has been brought up, he plods round, to use an old but significant expression, like an ass in an olive mill, and knows quite well how to deal with all the things about him. But take the ass out of the olive mill—turn him into a totally new scene—and you will find him

a very different sort of animal, amongst things he is unaccustomed to, and knows not what to make of.

Julian Ludlow speedily discovered that his companion had much more of the animal that walks in an olive mill, than he had imagined ; and, for a day or two, it gave him considerable pain and embarrassment. Without any determination to do so, however, he speedily gained that ascendancy over Marmaduke Knight which a superior mind is sure to obtain over an inferior, especially where there is force of character as well as brightness of intellect. This domination being once assumed, Marmaduke was very easily managed, as long as Julian was with him. It was the periods of his absence that Julian feared ; and as it was impossible for him to treat his companion as a mere child, of course he could not be always with him. Nevertheless, they got on through their tour very tolerably, till the extreme point of Messina had been reached, and they were some way on their

road homewards. In many a spot, indeed, where Julian would fain have lingered amidst natural loveliness and classic associations, his companion found nothing but monotony, and hurried their departure, Julian could not help thinking, for the purpose of returning a day or two sooner to Paris.

They had still three weeks before them, when, in the evening of an autumnal day, they reached a small town in the north of Italy, on the shores of one of the beautiful lakes which indent the lower regions of the Alps. The form of the lake was rather like that of Geneva, though on a smaller scale ; and, as it was farther distant from great cities than Como, or the Lago Maggiore, its banks and islands were not so spotted with palaces, and what I may call, to use a German name, pleasure-houses. Though they were few, however, the palaces which were seen when one stood at the southern end of the lake, and looked northward to the giant mountains that towered dim beyond, were of a finer,

and I might almost say more classical, taste ; for they had been built when Italian nobles were both powerful and wealthy, by those who, having more wealth, if not more power, than others, could afford to fly farther, in the brief periods of amusement and relaxation which chequered times of danger and strife, from the busy and perilous haunts of the city and the council chamber. The mansions were principally of the age of Palladio ; but, at the northern end of the lake, on a little peninsula, appeared the ruins of one of those ancient fortresses concerning which so many dark and terrible traditions are still current in Italy. It had been besieged by the French more than once, in what were called the wars of Savoy, and had been shattered by the cannon, and stormed by the troops, of the gallant Brissac. From that time, it had not been inhabited, and now stood, merely a picturesque object from the windows of the inn at the south,

and a place of pilgrimage for heretical travellers from England, who visited it with more veneration than they showed towards shrines far holier in the eyes of the people.

The travellers arrived too late to sail up the lake that evening, and they contented themselves with gazing at it for half an hour, as the sun-set flooded the whole valley with a sea of purple light. One or two boats were seen skimming over the bosom of the water; and happily, as Julian thought, his companion seemed to be smitten with a desire of sailing on the lake likewise. There is certainly something in the sight of a beautiful skiff, gliding easily along, with full sail and gentle motion, which might be almost called infectious. So much graceful power is in it—such command over the waves—that we long, as a child longs for the wings of the swallow, to be able to go and cleave the pure element with it.

Julian did not at all discourage young Knight's desire to remain where they

were during the next day, and to engage a boat to visit the old castle. Every day spent upon the journey was, he thought, a day gained ; for, with the knowledge he now had of his companion's character, Julian feared anything like a lengthened stay in Paris, where temptation in every shape was continually around him. The plan was thus arranged : the boat was hired for the following morning, and post horses were bespoken for the day after. Marmaduke Knight declared that it would be easy to save a day or two on the road to Paris ; but Julian determined it should not be so, if he could help it ; and his views in this respect were favoured by circumstances over which he had no control.

The next morning dawned brightly : the boat lay all prepared at the landing-place : the boatmen were sprawling on the ground, and playing at "pitch-and-toss" with as much careless indifference to all other things, though not quite so much vivacity, as if they had

been Neapolitans ; but Marmaduke Knight, who was not constitutionally an early riser, made his appearance half-an-hour after their expedition should have begun, and, when he did come down, required a very hearty breakfast to prepare him for the undertaking.

He was, to say the truth, both a dainty and a great eater ; and, as the cookery was pronounced excellent, all other amusements were considered subsidiary to the enjoyment of his meal.

Julian was impatient ; for there was in him too much of spirit to see calmly any one, and especially one in early youth, give himself up so entirely to mere material gratification. There are differences in men, which the inferior never feel. They may have, indeed, a vague sort of sensation that another man has greater powers of mind, greater scope of thought, more capability of acquisition, than they have ; but they never admit to themselves that a

greater portion of soul can be allotted to one man than to another, and that they are inferior in the immortal essence.

Such was the case with Marmaduke Knight ; and when Julian, half jestingly, half seriously, asked him how he could waste the charmed minutes of so beautiful a morning in dull sleep, or duller eating, he fully believed that the inquiry arose from affectation, and that his companion only spoke so from mere conventional habit.

At length, however, he was ready : a basket of provisions, and several bottles of choice wine, were carefully placed in the boat, and Julian and Marmaduke took their seats. The sail was exquisitely beautiful : the morning, still, bright and clear. Every quarter of a mile opened some fresh view between the gently-undulating hills ; presented the tall mountains behind in some new aspect, or brought into sight some villa previously unseen, or some palace which had been shrouded by the trees. The sunshine lay upon the water, like a

golden veil over a sleeping child; and the mountains, with a rare effect of light and shade, looked of a deeper and richer purple than they had displayed the night before. It is true, there was a slight, thin haze, not common in Italian skies, which softened and harmonized the outline and the tints, and blended all the rich hues of the autumnal foliage with the green banks of the lake and the blue hills around, leaving no harshness in the manifold contrasts of the landscape.

Sailing along at the distance of about half a mile from the eastern shore, the first object which the boat passed, worthy of any note, was a small villa of white marble, copied from some Greek temple; and the steersman, as they floated on, told Julian the story of the place—interesting enough on the spot, but not necessary to be detailed here. It was a tragedy, as most Italian stories are. Two sisters had poisoned each other in that house, from love for the same man; and

there were many accessories of sin and shame, which deepened the darkness of the crime and the terror of the tale.

Julian looked down gloomily : his mind was carried far away from the sad history—not without many a parallel—to reason with himself upon the strange, distant, and obscure causes which have rendered a people, full of genius, strongly imbued with a love of the beautiful, alive to every physical harmony of the universe, conspicuous in the annals of the world for vice and crime and wretchedness. Fiery passion, he thought; stern oppression, the influence of a false religion : but neither the one nor the other was sufficient—nor were all combined—to account for the long existence of such a state of society ; and he pondered deeply upon themes too grave for Marmaduke Knight, who, not understanding Italian, escaped the tale, as well as the reflections ; and, soon after, another villa came in sight, which had its story too.

Some way farther on, with an increasing distance between themselves and the shore, the two young travellers passed a larger mansion—a tall, magnificent house, with columns on two sides, and pilasters on the others—rising high above the bank of the lake. The grounds, which seemed at one time to have been laid out in the ancient taste, with terraces and gardens, and vases and statues, were now thickly planted with mulberry trees ; and it is probable that the impoverished proprietor derived a great portion of his revenue from the cultivation of the silk-worm. One broad path, with here and there a flight of marble steps, led down from the house, in a straight line, to a little sort of quay on the bank of the lake, near which a small sailing vessel, somewhat larger than that which bore Julian and his companion, lay with its slender masts and beautifully cut sails, apparently waiting for its freight. Three or four persons were standing about half way down the walk, as if debating

some question; and Julian could see one of them, a gentleman with a cane in his hand, pointing towards the western sky, upon which some hard, knotty clouds were beginning to appear.

The features of none of the parties were to be distinguished at that distance, and even the colors of their clothing could not be clearly seen; yet about each of them was that indescribable something which points out the Englishman to the Englishman; and Julian asked the boatmen if they were not his country people.

The man replied in the affirmative, but could tell nothing more; and proceeded to relate the story of that villa also, which was of a rather less terrible character than those he had before told.

Julian ventured to interrupt him in his narrative, in order to urge that they should make more sail, pointing to the sky, and asking if the clouds he saw did not portend a coming storm.

“Not yet—not yet,” replied the boat-

man. "We shall have time to get to the upper end of the lake ; and storms here never last long. They go to the mountains."

So far he was right : the boat sailed on with a very light wind which decreased as they proceeded, till Julian thought the men would have to take to their oars ; but still the sky grew darker, and the old castle, as they approached it, standing on a rock which seemed to rise higher and higher every moment from the line of the water, looked more gloomy and magnificent from the frowning vapours which now rolled between it and the mountains. It was reached, however, without one drop of rain having fallen, or one blast of the tempest having been felt. The men ran the boat into a little cove, on the eastern side of the rock, and the provisions were carried up a steep stone stair-case, into one of the ruined towers.

Julian and his companion followed their guides up to the battlements, and for a

few minutes gazed forth upon the lake, which certainly wore not its most beautiful aspect, but yet had gained a good deal of the sublime from the darkness which was now spreading rapidly over the sky.

The boat which they had seen lying near the shore, had followed them more closely than they had before perceived ; and was now hardly half a mile from the landing-place. Still, not a drop of rain was falling ; still not a breath of wind which could have blown a butterfly from its track, was felt even upon the tall battlements of the old fortress, though the sky was growing darker each moment with heavy contorted clouds like wreaths of leaden-colored smoke curling all over it. Below, upon the face of the lake, the air seemed to have become perfectly still ; for the sails of the boat which had followed, were hanging feebly from the spars, and she lay apparently quite moveless.

“ I vote we go into one of the old rooms and get some luncheon,” said Marmaduke

Knight ; "it will rain directly, and thunder too, I think."

"I will come presently," replied Julian. "I am a little anxious about the people in that boat. The squalls upon these lakes are at times very severe."

"Anxious!" exclaimed his companion, with a laugh ; "why, what have you to do with them, Ludlow?"

"They are fellow-creatures," replied Julian, "and, moreover, fellow-countrymen."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Knight, in a tone slightly more animated. "I did not know that. Are you sure?"

"Did you not hear the man tell me so?" asked Julian.

"Oh, it was in that abominable Italian," replied the other. "I did not know what you were chattering about all the way up.—But they seem to be sticking fast there in the middle of the lake. Why do they not take to their oars, I wonder?"

Julian was at that moment putting the

same question to the man who had steered, and who was now standing beside them. His reply was that boats of that size on the lake seldom had oars, and he added, "They will soon have enough wind, and perhaps too much."

"Can we not give them some help?" cried Julian, eagerly.

The man shrugged his shoulders, and seemed but little inclined to assist a rival boatman, to whom he gave a very indifferent character; but the promise of a small reward from Julian himself, and an intimation that the party of English who were in the little vessel were likely to pay handsomely for any real service, quickened the man's humanity a good deal.

"We must be prompt, if we do anything," he said, "for they can make no way—that is clear enough; and we shall have a sharp squall in a few minutes."

"What are you talking about?" asked Marmaduke Knight, with a vacant look.

The matter was soon explained to him;

but it never seemed to strike his imagination that he might volunteer to accompany Julian and the steersman on their charitable errand.

“It is coming at last,” ejaculated the boatman, interrupting the young Englishman in his announcement of what he intended to do during Julian’s absence. “Look there, Signore!”

He pointed to the lake as he spoke ; but Julian saw nothing to excite alarm. The surface of the water was gently moved with small rippling waves such as might well curl it on a calm summer’s day. They were a little closer together, indeed, like innumerable small lines suddenly traced over the still glassy expanse ; but there were no waves, no foaming billows. The sails of the boat, on which their eyes had been turned, were filled in a moment, and on she shot towards the old castle like an arrow from a bow.

Julian might have doubted whether it was not now unnecessary to proceed to her

aid ; but the boatman urged haste, and they both ran down the stone steps together, and reached the landing-place, where the other two men who had accompanied them thither, as if alarmed for their little craft, even there under the shelter of the rock, were busily unshipping the mast, and making all trim.

Few explanations were needed : the hope of gain was as powerful with them as with their companion ; and, while the three got everything ready, Julian ran out, for an instant, to the rocky point which concealed the little vessel he had been watching. The whole scene had been changed during the short space of time that had elapsed since he stood on the battlements above. His hat was blown off in a moment : he was obliged to catch firm hold of the angle of the crag to prevent himself from being driven into the water by the force of the wind ; and the whole surface of the lake was one mass of white foam. The vessel with the English party on board was seen

within two-hundred yards of the rock, with only one sail set to keep her on, but heeling over till that sail almost touched the water. The next instant, she righted ; but Julian knew well that the danger was not yet over, and, running back, he sprang into the boat now nearly ready : a moment after, the other men followed and pushed off. Their oars served them well under the lee of the rock ; and in thirty seconds they had rounded the point ; but, with feelings not to be described, Julian beheld the little vessel on her beam ends, two men clinging to her hull, and several other persons, men and women, struggling in the water. A group of two was very near—a gentleman, who seemed a strong swimmer, supporting a lady with one hand while he struck for the shore with the other. A little further, was a black haired Italian boatman, a good swimmer likewise, taking all care of himself ; but, on the right, drifting with a current which the wind carried eddying towards the point

and supported only by her dress, was another lady; and, though he could not see her face, there was something in her appearance that made the young man's heart sink with vague, and what seemed unreasonable, terror. He paused not to consider anything, however, but how to save her. He had been accustomed to the water from his youth: the Thames—the grave of so many drowned—had been his swimming-school; and, casting off his coat at once, he plunged into the lake, notwithstanding a sort of shrieking remonstrance from his boatmen. He sank a little—rose again—struck out, and, by a few vigorous efforts, neared the lady, crying—"Keep up—keep up!—I shall be with you in a second!"

The rush of the wind carried the distinct words away; but she heard the sound of a voice calling in tones of hope; and, by a struggling effort, turned her head towards Julian, striving to hold out her arms.

It was the face of a young girl, not eighteen, that he saw—a face well known

and dearly loved ; but the very effort she made sank her in the water, and Julian was only just in time to catch her by the arm and raise her head again above the waves.

“For heaven’s sake do not touch me, Mary!” he exclaimed. “Be quite still, and you are safe.”

But consciousness and reason were nearly gone. The impulse to catch at anything could not have been resisted even if she had heard and understood what Julian said ; and Mary clung to him with convulsive strength. Julian felt that they would both perish, notwithstanding every effort he made to keep her and himself up, by all the tricks which practised swimmers are early taught.

It is strange what curious thoughts pass through the minds of the drowning. “She will be lost,” he thought ; “but, thank God, I shall die with her.”

That was his only reflection at the moment ; but still he strove for her life and

his own, with the skill and with the coolness which only those much accustomed to be in the water can command in such circumstances. His arms were powerless, for hers were intertwined with them ; but he tried to tread the water with his feet, and sustain her head above the foam.

Her weight overbalanced him, however, and down—down they were going—the water rising over his mouth and eyes—all things growing green and indistinct around,—when suddenly a grasp was laid upon his collar ; a pair of strong arms were thrown round Mary Westwood ; and she and Julian once more saw the light of day.

The boat was close to them ; human faces looking down at them ; and cries, directions, and encouragement sounded in many a voice and more than one language. With care, and not without some difficulty—for the boat was now heavily laden—they were raised from the water and drawn in.

Another moment under the water, and

all consciousness would have been lost to Mary Westwood. As it was, everything seemed indistinct and whirling round her, full of confused images of the past and present, as in one of those dreams of terror where realities and fancies are blended inextricably : where the will is free, but the mind unmanageable, and the limbs powerless. All she felt was, that her head rested on her mother's knees, that her father bent over her, and that Julian Ludlow was there chafing her hands in his.

It was only when the boat reached the little landing-place—a feat not accomplished without difficulty, for the waters were whirling and rushing round the point, driven by a gale which now amounted almost to a hurricane—that Mary fully recovered her consciousness of all things.

Her father carried her up the stone stairs, and into a lower room of the old castle, which during the summer season was used as a sort of refreshment room, by a man who sold rosilo and iced drinks to thirsty

visitors. A few chairs and a table were left behind by him through the Autumn and Winter ; and Marmaduke Knight's luncheon was already spread out on the latter, with bottles of wine in goodly array, and one small drinking cup beside them.

Mistress Westwood, who while in the water had been supported by her husband, was able to walk with the assistance of Julian's arm, and from her he learned how their unexpected meeting in Italy had occurred. Soon after his own departure from England, the slight illness under which she had been long suffering assumed a more serious form ; and her husband, becoming alarmed, had insisted upon her seeing a physician. The report of that physician increased rather than diminished Julian Westwood's apprehensions; and he determined to adopt, at once, the course which the medical man recommended, as the only certain means of restoring Mistress Westwood to health. That course was

to go south of the Alps, and to spend the latter part of Autumn, the Winter, and the Spring, in Italy. The whole family set off accordingly, with the exception of the Squire, who declared that he was too old to quit his native land any more ; and not above a week had elapsed since their arrival in Italy, when Julian Ludlow met them as we have described.

Of course, a good deal of bustle and confusion took place at and after the landing of the travellers. The boatmen chattered, and screamed, and talked, and almost fought about many things ; but happily no one had been drowned ; and a great many candles were vowed to different shrines of the Virgin, who was supposed to have especially interposed for the safety of the party.

A man was sent off to seek for, and bring back with him, carriages to convey the English family and their friends to the villa which Mr. Westwood had hired on the

banks of the lake. Meanwhile, a chamber in one of the old towers was made into a temporary dressing-room ; dry garments were prepared for the two ladies from the houses of some of the peasantry in the neighbourhood ; and, after a long time had been spent in various discussions and arrangements, Julian introduced Marmaduke Knight to his old friends, and, for once in his life, the young man's propensity for the good things of life proved really serviceable to others. Young Knight was awkward and gawky enough ; for there are some men to whom not all the advantages of birth, easy circumstances, and education, will give the graceful suavity of a gentleman ; and, though no one knew better what to do theoretically, he did not know *how* to do it. He seemed a good deal struck with Mary Westwood's beauty, however, although it certainly did not appear to the greatest advantage with her dank hair, and her uncouth borrowed dress. He would fain have pressed more wine

upon her than she was at all inclined to take. Some refreshment, however, was beneficial; and before the three long hours were at an end, which elapsed ere the messenger's return, the whole party had regained, in a slight degree, not only their composure, but their cheerfulness, though the thunder was now rolling in heavy peals above, and the rain descended in torrents.

The storm had somewhat abated when they took their way back towards the other end of the lake; and the adventures of the day were over. Mr. Westwood, his wife, and daughter, went in one carriage, with one of the boatmen of the vessel, which had now sunk, on the box; and Julian and Marmaduke Knight followed close in the other, the latter talking incessantly for the first half-hour, and sleeping soundly through the whole of the rest of the way.

Julian was not sorry when Marmaduke's loquacity came to an end; for the former was

inclined to be very grave and thoughtful. There was cause enough for thought ; and the accident which had happened to friends so dearly loved, although unattended with fatal consequences, was sufficient to account for his gloom. But the heart of man, like the surface of the globe, has stratum below stratum ; and that which is on the surface is often the thinnest. It was not the accident which had occurred, the peril which the Westwood family had passed through, or any of the ordinary associations which might arise from such events, that afforded the deepest foundation for the sort of melancholy anxiety which pictured itself on Julian's countenance. It was rather that the events of that day had given him an insight into things in his own heart, of which he previously knew not the existence. He strove, indeed, to fly from the view ; but he felt that he was standing on the brink of a precipice, though he did not dare to look down. The perils of his situation were made more

clear to him before he parted from his friends ; for, when he entered the villa, for a moment, with Marmaduke Knight, to bid them adieu before going on to the inn, he was met by Mary with extended hands and a beaming face.

“ My father tells me, dear Julian,” she said, “ that I owe my life to you ; and also that, in my terror and want of reason, I had nearly deprived you of life as well as myself, by clinging to you while you were trying to save me. How can I ever thank you enough, Julian, or plead enough for your forgiveness ? But indeed I was utterly unconscious of what I did. I did not even know who was near me.”

The joy which these words produced was accompanied by a pang such as Julian Ludlow had never felt in his life before ; and both together showed him feelings in his breast, which he knew it was madness to entertain.

When he re-entered the carriage which was to bear him on, he cast himself back

in the corner, and would fain have given himself up to thought ; but Marmaduke Knight would not let him, commenting upon his silence and his gloom, jestingly telling him that he was a very lucky fellow, and might well afford to be gay after such a sweet girl's sweet words, and then discussing, with great satisfaction, the merits of the dinner which he had taken care to order before they set out in the morning.

Of the latter part of his conversation, Julian heard but little. The words "truffles of Savoy" rang once or twice in his ears ; but he paid no attention, till his companion enquired at what time they were to set off in the morning.

"I must ride over to enquire after Mr. Westwood's family," replied Julian. "But I can do that early, for they are all matutinal in their habits ; and then I shall be ready whenever you please."

The dinner passed off as Marmaduke Knight could have wished ; and Julian

Ludlow, whose clothes had dried upon him, so that he had not thought it necessary to change them, drank several more glasses of wine than he was accustomed to take ; partly to get rid of a sensation of chilliness which spread over him, and partly to drive away a certain cold feeling of the heart which comes upon us when the first warm hopes of youth are checked and rebuked by the aspect of stern and hard realities.

But the wine was not successful in either case. A sharp, long-continued fit of shivering seized upon Julian Ludlow before dinner was fully over ; and half an hour after, his face was flushed with an unhealthy red, and his eyes were bright with the glare of fever.

CHAPTER X.

GRIEF and anxiety cast a gloom over the Aldi villa, when, on the morning following the ill-starred expedition of its inmates to the old castle at the end of the lake, Mr. Westwood, who had set out early in the morning on a sudden summons from the inn, returned with Julian Ludlow in the carriage. Mistress Westwood had not quitted her room—for the hour was still early—but Mary was just down; and, ignorant till her father's return that he had been sent for, or that Julian was ill, the first sight of his pale face and heavy eyes

seemed to take all strength from her frame. A room was hastily prepared, and Julian was assisted up the stairs to a bed which he was not to quit for more than two weeks.

But the histories of sicknesses are always dull, be they those of royal personages or of humble men. Let us, therefore, pass lightly over that of Julian Ludlow. Suffice it, he had been attacked by one of the fevers of the country, the seeds of which had probably been planted in the neighbourhood of Milan, and which had only been brought into activity by the wetting he had received, and the drying of his clothes upon him. Let us pass by, also, all the comments of the servants upon the great interest which Mr. Westwood and all the family seemed to take in his fate. Those who had come from England understood the matter quite well—at least, according to their own belief ; and the opinions of those who had been hired in Italy, matters not much to our tale.

One subject seemed to give poor Julian great concern through the early part of his illness, running in his mind during the day, and breaking forth in words during the slight delirium that affected him at night. This was the means of getting back Marmaduke Knight in safety to England. The vacation was approaching its conclusion, and he himself had no chance of reaching the University at the commencement of the Term ; but he felt a great responsibility in regard to his young companion, and great doubt also of his reaching his native country without getting into some terrible scrape, if suffered to go alone.

Not without that class of good feelings which spring from gentleness and softness of heart, Marmaduke Knight was a constant attendant upon his friend's bed-side, and showed himself in fairer colours in a sick-room, than perhaps anywhere else. The sensibilities of a refined mind he did not possess ; but good nature supplied the

place of tact; and Julian's old regard for him, which had considerably waned during their tour, returned in the hours of illness. The young man, indeed, seemed to give no thought to the subject of his own return; and while his friend injured himself by anxiety on his account, he appeared to entertain none whatever on his own. One day, however, when the first symptoms of amendment began to appear in the invalid, Julian Westwood entered the sick-room with an expression of care and thought, not often seen on his placid countenance.

"I am very glad to see you so much better, my dear boy," he said; "for I am sorry to tell you that I shall have to leave you to the care of others. To-morrow morning, very early, I must set out for England upon business, which may detain me some time; but I shall leave my own man here, and he must be your head nurse. He has known you from your childhood, and is a good, honest fellow; so that I doubt not he will take as much care of you

as I could do. I had better give notice to your friends at Oxford, that you are too ill to have any hope of saving your Term. Can I do anything else for you in England?"

"There is one thing I am, indeed, very anxious about," replied Julian, "and that is for the return of my friend Knight. If you could give him a seat in your carriage, or take him with you in any way, it would be a great relief to my mind."

"Willingly," returned Mr. Westwood, "if you think he will be ready to go at such short notice. But if he is not, surely he is old enough to find his way back to Oxford by himself."

Julian did not choose to say all he thought upon the subject, but merely replied,

"He is very easily led, and might meet with companions who would not lead him right. As his mother, Mistress Knight, seemed to place great confidence in me and wrote me two long letters upon the

subject, I feel a responsibility in the matter of his return ; and though it may be asking too great a favour—”

“ Oh, not at all—not at all,” interrupted Julian Westwood. “ I will write him a note directly, though I dare say he will be here before night. My journey must be a very rapid one indeed ; but that of course will be no objection to a young man. And now, Julian, you must promise not to leave this house till you hear from me. I have talked with the physician ; and he says that a month must elapse before you can possibly travel, even if this Italian fever should not leave you incapable of application for some months. You will be as well here as any where else. And besides, you will have to take care of Mistress Westwood and Mary. I shall take your promise for granted, and will look in upon you early to-morrow before I go. I have a great deal to do this evening in the way of preparation.”

After he had done speaking, however, he remained for several minutes by Julian’s

bed side, plunged in a deep and apparently melancholy fit of thought. Julian did not actually give the promise he required in words ; but he felt so feeble that there seemed little chance to him of being able to undertake any journey, even as soon as the physician anticipated. Mr. Westwood at length started up, and bade his young protégé good bye for the evening. He went into his room again early on the following morning ; but Julian was in a calm sleep, and he did not disturb him. The young man had the satisfaction, however, of hearing, when he awoke, that Marmaduke Knight had accompanied Mr. Westwood in his journey ; and, with his mind relieved on that score, he tried to banish every other source of anxiety, in order to recover his health as soon as possible.

Ten days passed ere he could quit his room ; and those ten days went by nearly in solitude. Mistress Westwood visited

him with her husband's old servant, twice every day, and the good man himself was as kind and attentive as he could be; but he was old, and garrulous, and fidgetty—fond of moving chairs and tables, and doing more than any body wanted—so that Julian, especially as he was getting better, when a certain degree of irritability is sure to succeed the lassitude of disease, took every method that was not unkind to shorten the valet's visits. He became very anxious, too, to creep out of the dull monotony of his one chamber; and, although at length the physician said that he did not see much objection, the old servant, taking more care of his young charge than either the doctor or himself, remonstrated vigorously against the attempt.

He was far too weak, he said: he would only throw himself all the way back again: the more haste the worse speed: he knew a thousand instances where precipitation had been ruinous. And

he proceeded to detail two or three, enhanced by circumstances which were perhaps a little apochryphal.

Julian, however, though he said nothing in opposition, resolved to have his own way, if he should feel his strength equal to rising on the following morning. He slept well and calmly; and the Autumn day-light woke him a couple of hours before the old servant was accustomed to visit him. It was one of those bright days which, in Italy especially, come from time to time to cheer the departure of the year. The sunshine was more mellow than that of Summer: the trees still retained a good deal of their foliage; though the verdant tints of youth had given way, in a great degree, to the prophetic colouring of Autumn. He felt refreshed: the sunshine, as it poured through the windows, drawing a variegated pattern on the floor, seemed to revive him. He lay for a few minutes considering what he should do; but at length he rose and opened the

window ; and, feeling himself stronger than he had expected, and far more so than the day before, proceeded to dress himself with no little care.

We are all fools to our own internal motives. They sport with us as they please, and seldom, if ever, let us know what they are doing. Julian believed firmly that he only wished to make himself look as well as possible, to prevent Mistress Westwood from feeling any apprehension at what she might call his rash proceeding.

Perhaps if he had looked a little deeper in his heart, he might have found out that some idea, or memory, or feeling, in regard to Mary Westwood had no little to do with the attention which he paid to his dress.

However that might be, it must be confessed that, even when he was fully dressed, and when his hair, rich and abundant as ever, was carefully brushed round his brows, he still made a somewhat gaunt and grim

looking portrait of what he had formerly been.

All was quiet in the house : no broom of housemaid knocked against the skirting-board : no sound of human voices was heard ; and it was not till he had opened the door, and got to the top of a beautifully constructed stair-case, that he became aware of anybody being up in the house but himself. Then, however, he distinctly heard some one moving below ; but that did not deter him ; and, thinking that it was one of the servants more early in his habits than the rest, he quietly walked down the stairs, holding by the bannisters as he went. He found his way to the great saloon, which opened upon the colonnade in front, and found the room vacant. Saloons are not often swept out in Italy ; and, indeed, there was nobody to sweep the present ; for it is quite enough for an Italian housemaid—when of the female sex, which does not always happen—to dust any little ornaments and

trinkets about the room, without taking care of the floor, which she wisely determines will be soiled again almost as soon as swept. Thus, the dirt remains till it is kicked out, and then it returns very rapidly.

The room, then, was vacant ; but a great centre window, which served the purposes of a door, had been divested of its shutters, and was partly open. Julian walked slowly and quietly across, and looked out. The scene before the window was beautiful ; but far the most beautiful object to his eyes was Mary Westwood seated on a marble bench, with a small table before her, busily engaged in sketching the opposite shores of the lake, including the old Castle, and the promontory on which it stood.

I really do not know whether it was very wrong or not—and if it was, I cannot help it ; for I do not set up Julian Ludlow as a pattern of perfection—but certainly he stayed full ten minutes gazing at Mary

Westwood, without taking any step to make her conscious of his presence. If he wanted any defence, he might have put in several pleas ; as first, that he came there solely to look at the beauties of nature : to refresh himself with the sight of loveliness : and that none was so pleasant to his eye as herself : therefore, that he might just as well have been expected to tell the mountains he came to look at them, as to tell her. Or he might have taken a contrary ground, and said, that, in all important matters, some time is required for consideration : that an interview with Mary Westwood at that moment, and in those circumstances, was a matter of immense importance to him ; and that therefore ten minutes was not at all too long to consider whether he ought to open the door entirely and go out, or whether he had better creep back quietly to his room, and weep.

There would have been some truth in each of these pleas, and more truth still in

both of them mixed together. Julian was weak from illness, and a little irresolute ; but, as I have shown, he was of a warm and impetuous disposition, which illness may subdue for a time, but cannot extinguish. The reader may therefore easily judge what course he followed. He stood and gazed for full ten minutes, letting his eye rest upon the beautiful line of her figure, as she bent gracefully over the drawing ; upon the fair, soft hand, with the slender fingers tipped with rose, worthy ambrosial May ; upon the small, delicate, almost transparent ear ; upon the head, and neck, with the rich brown hair turned up in a glossy mass, like that of a Greek statue, and some small curls broken away from the general fold, and hanging on the alabaster skin, nests for young Loves.

She sat very still, with nothing but the movement of the hand over the paper, and every now and then a sigh heaving her bosom—as if there were yet some happiness not hers. The very sight was

enough to fix him there ; drinking in, as the poet has it, “ draughts of enchanting beauty to his soul.” But those very draughts made him doubt what he should next do ; for he felt that he was lost if he took much more of them.

Doubtless, Eve, after the first bite at the apple—when the knowledge of good and evil came rushing upon her in a bewildering flood—wondered why she had tasted it at all, and wished to heaven she had not (which, by the way, rendered it more inexcusable of her to get Adam into the same scrape ; for, by that time, she must have known she was doing wrong) ; and certainly Julian Ludlow wished to heaven, that, in a moment of terrible peril, when death seemed the inevitable fate of both, the secret chambers of his heart had not been opened to him, and that he had never known that it was possible to love Mary Westwood otherwise than as a sister.

Hesitation, however, soon gave way ;

and, opening the door completely, he walked out into the portico. His first step upon the marble, made Mary start and look up. I wonder what she was thinking of—something that had slumbering fire in it ; for the blood rushed up into her face, as if even thought could be detected.

The next instant, however, she was all calm again, and her hand was fondly given to Julian, and her eyes sparkled with pleasure at beholding him, even while her warm false lips were reproaching him for venturing out, and venturing out so early.

He assured her, however, that it would do him good—that he felt the air refresh him ; and indeed all that he beheld seemed laden with health-restoring antidotes ; and then he seated himself on the marble bench beside her, and looked at the sketch she had been drawing.

Thus, and in this situation—very close to each other, and with beautiful objects all around them—began a conversation

which affected the fate of both for ever.

But, as it was the oddest conversation in the world, and conducted in the oddest manner, it shall have a chapter to itself.

CHAPTER XI.

THE drawing was nearly finished, and they both gazed at it for a moment in silence, while association was busy in each heart. One day was present to the mind of both—one series of events, little varied in either bosom—one memory, terrible but bright, as the climax. Julian remembered the calm, sweet sail up the lake, the various villas he had passed, the story attached to each, the group of people whom he had seen descending towards their boat from that very portico, the interest he had felt in them; and, without knowing who they were, the anxiety he had experi-

enced for them as the moment of peril approached.

Mary recollected the consultation in the garden as to the probability of a speedy storm, the sight of the boat which contained Julian and his companion, and how the easy and confident manner in which they were sailing on had given her father and mother encouragement to run the risk. She recollected, too, that she wondered who that gay looking boat could contain, in one of those idle, dreamy moods in which imagination sports with all the playthings of possibility ; that she had set out quite fearless ; that terror had increased upon her with the increasing wind, till her heart sank and her limbs trembled, and in a moment she found herself carried round in the whirling water.

“It was there,” said Mary, putting her finger on a spot in the paper. “Just there.”

“A little more on this side,” suggested Julian, pointing to another spot.

Their fingers were close together ; and Mary, as if his words were an injunction, drew a little nearer to that side also.

Whether there be any such thing as animal magnetism or not, I cannot say ; but the hands were so close together that an irresistible inclination seized them to creep round each other.

Yet it was done so quietly, and they both looked upon it so much as the most natural thing in the world, that the color did not even deepen in Mary's cheek ; and, though Julian's hand trembled a little, it might have been from illness. She owed her life to him : he had risked his to save her. What could be more natural, after all, than that their hands should clasp, when looking on the spot where for a moment their existence had mingled—where there had seemed no earthly separation for them—where life and death had

bound them for an instant as in a chain of adamant ?

Mary left her hand in his, and Julian continued to hold it.

"It was a little more on this side, dear Mary," he repeated. "Don't you see there is the rocky point below the Castle? It was just to the eastward of that, and somewhat to the south. I remember quite well I could not see your boat from below, till I ran round to the extreme end, and the wind blew my hat off into the lake."

"Did you know we were in the boat?" asked Mary.

"No, I did not," he answered, frankly. "I had no idea you were in Italy; and yet there was something very strange—a sort of instinct, it seemed—which made me feel as if those I loved best were in the boat I had been watching so anxiously."

Mary was silent; but why or wherefore she knew not, though her heart fluttered a good deal at the words "those I loved best."

"I did not absolutely know," continued Julian, "that you were there until I was

within a few yards of you in the water. You then turned your head, as I called to you to keep up, and I felt as if I should have sunk myself when I saw that it was really you."

But Mary's mind ran on. "Oh! did you not think me very foolish, very mad," she said, "when I clasped you so wildly, and nearly cast away my only chance?"

"No," answered Julian, in a low voice, touched with strong emotion. "No—at that moment, when we were both sinking, I had but one thought."

"What was that, Julian? what was that?" she said, in an eager but soft tone. He hesitated, and she added—"Tell me—oh! tell me, Julian."

"I said, 'Thank God I shall perish with her!'" replied Julian.

Mary was silent; but she put her hand upon her heart, and gazed in his face, while she turned pale for an instant, and then her face was all in a glow, and then the tears rose up in her eyes, swam round the verge of the dark lashes, like the

diamond waters of some fairy fountain, and then a drop or two went over upon her cheek.

"They were mad words," said Julian, in a grave tone, "and I believe I am mad now to tell them to you."

"No, no, no !" cried Mary, "oh, no !—Why should you say so ?" And then she added, in a lower tone, grave and thoughtful, as if she were speaking with herself, "It is better for me to know."

Suddenly she pushed the drawing from the table. "There—let it lie there," she said, as Julian was rising to pick it up. "We will talk of other things. You are not strong enough yet, Julian, to speak of such terrible events—nor do I know that I am either.—See how foolish I am !—I cannot even keep the tears out of my eyes when I am thinking of them !—And you must be very careful of your health, dear Julian ; if not for your own sake, for the sake of those who love you.—We must both be gay and cheerful, too, when

mamma comes down ; for, though she has not suffered at all from what occurred that day, she is very sad and anxious, and will be till she hears from my father."

A tone of deep sadness was in her voice as she uttered the last words; and Julian asked in some alarm, "Has anything gone amiss?"

"Did not my father tell you?" said Mary; and she went on to inform Julian that the cause of Mr. Westwood's sudden journey to England was the illness of the old Squire, who had been struck in a moment with palsy, and remained speechless when the last accounts had been sent.

Few pieces of intelligence could be more painful to Julian. He grieved deeply and sincerely ; yet, strange to say, the information was an advantage—I must not call it a relief—coming just at the moment it did in his conversation with Mary. It was a sort of full stop—brought one branch of the subject to a close; and let me say that it is sometimes lucky when acci-

dent takes this sort of punctuation out of men's hands ; for there is no part of composition of which they are generally more ignorant. Few, if any, people know where to stop ; and lovers, of all persons on earth, are the most apt to run on without even a comma.

I have said that it was an advantage that thus naturally, though abruptly, the course of the subject matter which they were discussing was brought to a pause ; and so it was. Now, only consider, dear reader, what was the point at which they had arrived, and what must have been the consequences if they had gone on unchecked. It had been made quite clear and definite to Mary's mind—or rather to her heart, which had more to do with the matter—that Julian loved her ; and equally clear to Julian that Mary returned his love. All this had been effected, too, without the thunder-clap of a formal declaration. A mutual understanding was established, which, for the time, was all that

was necessary to set both their hearts at ease, and—as those two hearts were constituted—to plight and pledge them to each other for ever. Had they pursued the same topic, however, the consequences must have been very serious. They would have been driven to consider and discuss all sorts of proprieties, which, as the reader well-knows, are the most difficult things in the world to handle. The words of love would have had to be plainly spoken : Julian would have had to propose an immediate notification of their feelings to Mr. Westwood : Mary would have had to think of telling her mother. The whole would have been complicated by Julian's promise to remain at the villa till he heard from England ; and vows of endless affection, and untiring faith, and what novelists call “burning” kisses, too, might have mingled with the whole, and made confusion more confused. Let me remark, however, in passing, that I never in my life knew—and I have had some ex-

perience—kisses burn. Oh no ! Love's kisses, however warm, will never burn. They are too sweet—too gentle : they bear their own balm with them, and have nothing of fire but the light and the genial influence.

All would have been very well, then when the old Squire's illness had once been mentioned ; but lovers will not let well alone ; and Julian soon brought the conversation round again to the point from which it had diverged.

Poets tell us that pity is akin to love ; but grief is nearer still. The moment some mutual sorrow takes possession of two hearts, how closely it binds them together ! Nay more : how often, when cold estrangement has come between them, when hard thoughts and misconstructions have risen up where once was tenderness, does that mutual sorrow heal all wounds, and remedy all the maladies of the heart !—how often does it bring back peace, and tenderness, and attachment !

The transition, therefore, was easy for Julian and Mary, from their grief back to their love.

“What would he think could he see all at this moment?” said Julian Ludlow, in a low voice, half meditating, half-addressing Mary.

It was rather an indefinite way of putting a question. He did not particularize anything. He did not name any person ; but what had passed before, connected his words with the old Squire, and Mary’s own heart easily connected them with what was in itself. She answered, quite simply, but with an earnest sort of confidence which showed her mind quite clear of all those doubts and apprehensions which disturbed her lover.

“I think he would bless us,” she said.
“I am very sure he would.”

Julian sat silent, swallowed up by thought and anxiety ; and Mary remarked the gloom upon his countenance, saying—

“ You are very grave, Julian. Are you not happy ?”

“ Happy in all but in doubts that my happiness will last,” replied Julian. “ I can hardly believe in its reality, much less in its permanence, Mary. How, indeed, can I believe—how, indeed, can I trust—that such dreams will ever be fulfilled ? Oh, Mary—Mary, it seems to me that what happened to us off yonder point was but an image—a type, as it were—of what is happening now—with this difference, however ; that it is I who am struggling with the waves of life, and, while gasping for the uncertain breath of happiness, I am dragging you down with me.”

“ Never fear,” she answered, in a sweet, calm tone. “ Carry the image out, Julian, and be sure some hand will save us both.”

Mary spoke as she had never spoken before. Her girlish tenderness mingled with womanly strength. It seemed as if the few words of that morning had

changed her—had opened for her a new phase of being ; but she added, quickly, the moment after, half playfully, half gravely—

“We will talk of these things no more now, Julian. They are too much for you so soon after your illness. They are too much for me, perhaps, in my weakness. Let them rest for a time. We comprehend each other now. Surely that is enough. Hereafter, when you are better—when my father returns—it will be time enough to think more and to talk more of all this. At present, let us be cheerful and happy as before.”

Julian would fain have asked her if, by the words, “we comprehend each other now,” she meant to imply that there had been previous thoughts and doubts as to his feelings towards her. But accident stood their friend that day in many things ; and just as the words were trembling on his lips, a servant came from the saloon behind them, with a message from

Mistress Westwood, desiring her daughter to make the breakfast, and saying that she would appear in a few minutes.

Mary rose instantly, saying, with a smile, "Come, Julian! Mamma will be surprised to find you down. Mind, Maddocks, that no one tells your mistress that he is down, till she sees him." And she led the way to the dining-room of the villa.

Julian was far more agitated than she; but, to explain how this happened, I should add, that she would have been ten times more agitated, if love had come upon her suddenly. Its development had been so gradual, however—it had so completely grown with her growth, and strengthened with her strength—she had so learned to love him in childhood and in youth—that, when they had met there that morning, there was but one step more to be taken, and that was an easy one. It might, indeed, have been otherwise—far otherwise—even circumstanced in all general respects as they were. She might

have gone on fancying that she loved him merely as a brother—never dreaming that such attachment could ripen into any stronger feeling; and when she found how intense and deep, was her love for him, and his love for her, the discovery might have shaken and agitated her terribly. But her governess had undermined such delusions long before—had shown her what might be—had taught her not only to scan her own heart, but to watch Julian's words and looks; and thus she knew that he loved her, even before he knew it himself. With regard to her own feelings, she would gladly have shrunk from any minute investigation. But it was forced upon her from time to time, even after her governess was gone, by a thousand little incidents hardly tangible, yet working powerfully. Her mother's looks and words, at times—her father's or the old Squire's eager commendations of Julian,—and the emotions that these things produced in her own bosom, had been school-

ing, her for two or three months past, in that science of the heart which forms and perfects woman's character. Thus, though full of warm emotions, thrilling to every tender word or look of love, capable even of the strongest and most ardent passion, Mary was less moved than Julian when the moment of explanation came. She was perfectly calm and tranquil when Mistress Westwood entered; and her lover's agitated thoughtfulness passed unobserved in consideration of his recent recovery from severe illness.

CHAPTER XII.

How rarely is it—more rarely than when, in the midst of the broad Atlantic, vessel meets vessel—that man can ask his heart, “What cheer?” and receive for answer, “All’s well.”

When Julian Ludlow retired to his chamber that night—when the door was closed, and, by the kindly but officious care of Mr. Westwood’s valet, he was hurried to bed more rapidly than he desired—he lay awake for upwards of an hour, notwithstanding the exhaustion of illness, and the

unusual fatigue. The cry rose up within him—"What cheer?" But the answer never was "All's well." At one time, it was "Breakers a-head!" and at others, the same voice spoke of dangers all around.

Every one has felt how different is the aspect of the same facts and circumstances at each varying hour of the day; how differently we look upon our fate and future in the merry morning, in the sunny noon, and in the dull, silent night; and there left alone, with the dim watch-lamp winking in the chimney, almost all that was bright and cheering in the events of that day passed away from Julian's eyes like unreal pageants; and nothing but the dark, and the coarse, and the heavy remained.

Sometimes he could hardly believe it real; that he had spoken as he had; that Mary had so answered him; that their almost insane love had been breathed to each other; that their hearts had found voice in sounds beyond recal. It seemed a dream—a vision, which could have no

truth in it ; and yet it came back and back upon him with an awful sense of all its consequences. Was not the love itself rash, mad, hopeless ? Had not the avowal of it been wrong, base, ungrateful ? What would Mr. Westwood think—he who had loaded him with kindness—he who had fostered, with such tenderness, his youth, promoted his views in manhood, interested himself in every turn of his fate—what would *he* think, when he found that the child of his bounty, the son of the simple village carpenter, had raised his eyes to his daughter, had used the advantages which the bounty of himself and his family had bestowed, to win her love, and perhaps to darken all the prospects of her future life ? Bitter—bitter, was his self reproach ; but it was nothing to his despair. To hope was mere frenzy : he knew it well and yet what could he do ? He could not fly. He was too weak to go immediately. He had promised to remain, even if he had been strong enough ; and

had he not done so, could he leave Mary to despair like his? Could he abandon her side whom he had but that morning linked to himself by a bond to which all the bonds of society are frail and empty?

Wretchedness seemed before him on whatsoever side he turned. Clouds, and storms, and tempests, covered the whole sky. No—no. One bright point stood in the midst of the darkness. He was loved—he was loved! One sweet sound rose up in the midst of the din of agonized and tumultuous feelings. It was the voice of Mary, speaking love, and hope, and confidence.

Where got she that calm trust which she showed? he asked himself. Whence came that mild and quiet assurance? Where did that young, gentle girl find the strength to struggle against the waves that overwhelmed him? Was it in ignorance, or in knowledge? In enduring meekness, or in loftiness of spirit?

He could not tell ; but still the sweet voice spoke, the bright light glimmered through the shadows, and they calmed him at length. He resolved upon his conduct : the first confused agitation of his thoughts subsided : the way before him grew more distinct ; and, though steep and rugged—though difficult, perilous, and painful—he nerved his mind to tread it resolutely. He would be to Mary, he thought, merely what he had been before : he would show no change in manner or in words : he would be the Julian Ludlow of earlier years, and let that day be blotted from remembrance—as far as remembrance, at least, could affect conduct—till her father's return. Then he would tell him all—acknowledge his folly—express his regret ; and in the end act exactly as Mr. Westwood might direct.

Oh, foolish mind of youth, which, amongst all the unstable things whereon it counts, reckons up its own resolutions,

mingling the impossible with the improbable, till the whole fabric tumbles down, and is found to be of sand!

Julian rose a good deal later on the following morning. Thought, vigilance, care, anxiety, self-reproach, hopelessness, had made the night a wearisome and a weakening one, and he looked haggard and pale at the breakfast-table, alarming Mary, and making even Mistress Westwood remark that she feared he had over exerted himself on the preceding day. However, during the few short hours of autumnal light, he executed his purpose steadfastly. No tender words, no sighs, no looks of love, passed between him and Mary; and he felt confident in his own strength. He was pleased, too, with his plan, and fancied that he should be able to carry it out successfully during the few days that were likely to intervene between the actual present and Mr. Westwood's return. He slept more that night; for he imagined that he was now sure of victory over himself. The

next day he was better ; for he had slept well, and Mary did not perceive any trace of care or sorrow having visited him. Once or twice, when he was alone with her for a few moments, he was strongly tempted to renew the subject, and to tell her his resolution ; but something within seemed to whisper that, if he did, the whole would have to be gone over again : that love would find a voice, as soon as the name of love was mentioned, and that in fact he was going to seek a combat, with the wounds of the last strife yet unhealed.

In a day or two, Julian was well enough to drive out in a carriage, and then to ride on horseback ; and long and frequent were his absences, lest opportunity should bring temptation, which he wished by all means to avoid. Daily he went over to the post-office at the small town at the southern extremity of the lake. Very often, there were no letters, and he returned disappointed ; but one day there was a letter addressed in Mr. Westwood's hand to his

wife ; and Julian, when he turned away, and was mounting his horse, felt a painful anxiety to know the contents, though he divined them but too well, in part at least, by the black edge upon the paper, and the black seal which the paper bore. He was too much pre-occupied to notice a person who stood near the little window of the post-office, and who gazed at him with great earnestness while he was enquiring for the letters for the villa.

The stranger was a middle-aged man, with a very sharp, shrewd, penetrating countenance, somewhat dashinglly dressed, and distinguished by a sort of off-hand, jaunty, rapid manner which affected his lightest movement. He seemed, with his clear, quick eyes, to look into the thoughts of every one at once ; to be perfectly conscious of his faculty ; and to be ready to deal in an instant with any one he might encounter, upon the strength of this sort of instinctive perception. His face was a good deal tanned by exposure to the sun,

and his skin was naturally of a rather coarse texture ; but, though his eyes—sharp as they were—were of that sort of no color which people call grey, his moustachios and whiskers were of jet black, and his hair seemed to have been originally of the same color, though every here and there, in the locks which escaped from under his hat, the silver mingled with the sable. He was a little above the middle height—perhaps five feet ten, or nearly so ; but, though it was evident that he had passed his first youth, and that six of the seven out of the allotted tens had flitted away from him, at the least—yet he had not lost anything of the perfection of a figure which seemed to have been formed by Nature for strength and agility.

The moment Julian had ridden away, the stranger, who seemed to have established a sort of acquaintance with the post-master, walked up to the window, where there was no other applicant at the

moment, and, in not the choicest Italian that ever was spoken, enquired who the gentleman was. The post-master told him, as well as he could contrive to pronounce the name of Ludlow, which he had seen on the cover of one or two letters delivered to the young Englishman since his arrival. The stranger seemed a sort of *Œdipus*, however; for he solved the riddle in a minute, and entered into a sort of gossiping conversation with the post-master, in regard to Julian, which was partly carried on in Italian, partly in French, which he seemed to speak a good deal more fluently. The post-master himself had served under Napoleon, and was rather proud of his French; though he had that softness of the vowels which always indicates a southern origin.

The gossip lasted till the hour of dinner, and the stranger walked back to the inn with the ruler of the destiny of letters, still talking as he went, and still making

Julian Ludlow, and the family at the villa, the themes of his conversation.

I have said that he walked back with the post-master to the inn ; and perhaps it may be necessary to explain to the reader that, in those days, both in France and Italy, all unmarried officials—with a few eccentric exceptions—had some little hole or corner where they passed the hours of sleep, while their meals were taken at an inn or boarding-house, and the rest of their leisure time was spent at the coffee-house ; except when they sat themselves down under an arcade, or in a shady angle of the public square, “ *per piglar la fresca.*”

The post-master and the stranger sat down to dinner side by side, a relative position which they had occupied at their meals for the last four days ; but on this occasion a new guest was at the table on the left hand of the stranger. He was a tall, stout, powerful man, very quietly but

well dressed, and with exceedingly mild, insinuating manners. He had, indeed, a habit of knitting his brows from time to time, in a way which seemed to show that he could occasionally fall into a greater passion than the general suavity of his demeanour seemed to promise. He was soon in full conversation with his foreign neighbour, who appeared to remark nothing particular in his appearance, notwithstanding a significant glance, and a pinch of the arm from the post-master. A wonderful degree of intimacy sprung up between them, which could only be accounted for by supposing some latent natural sympathy. Taking that interrogatory liberty which foreigners are accustomed to indulge in towards Englishmen—and the accent of the stranger betrayed him—the new guest put several pointed and rather personal questions to his acquaintance, such as—Was he travelling for amusement? Was he married? Was he rich?

Don't let the reader be surprised. We

have heard the same questions asked, even of a lady, twenty times.

To all these enquiries the stranger very frankly answered "No," and, in his reply to the last of them, added "that he was waiting for remittances to carry him back to England."

The other appeared to be a philosopher, however, and not to estimate a man by his wealth ; for he did not suffer the announcement of poverty to diminish his courtesy, and seemed a good deal struck and captivated by the shrewd, trenchant, man-of-the-world, adventurerish observations of his new found friend. He went away, however, as soon as actual dinner was over, and when the nuts and almonds were put upon the table, making a sort of semi-appointment to meet the Englishman that evening in a coffee-house which he named.

Shortly after he was gone, the postmaster and the Englishman both rose, and sauntered out together into the

piazza. Everything is sauntered in Italy; and the post-master, though he had something important to communicate—or at least thought so—sauntered as quietly as possible with his acquaintance to a remote part of the Square, and then asked him if he knew whom he had been talking to at dinner.

“I don’t know *whom*; but I know *what*,” replied the stranger.

The other shook his head, remarking—

“I doubt it, Doctor.”

“Will you let me guess three times?” said his companion; and, as the other nodded his head, he added—

“He is either a *capo di sbirri*, or a common gambler, or a *capo di bandi*.”

The post-master literally started at the last words, and gazed at his companion as if he had been in presence of a prophet.

“In Heaven’s name, who told you so?” he ejaculated.

The other laid one finger of his right

hand first upon one eye and then upon the other, replying with a laugh—

“It is a part of my profession, excellent sir, to see men through and through.”

“Well, Doctor,” observed the other, gravely, and nodding his head, “if you will take my advice you will have nothing to do with him. You are keen enough, I can see ; but there are rough ways of blunting sharp weapons.”

The other laughed gaily.

“I am not the least afraid of him,” he said. “First, because I have nothing to lose, and secondly, because I may even gain something. Now, if you will come to the coffee-house to-night, some time after me, you shall see me win twenty scudi of that same man : perhaps I may win a great deal more, for the fun of the thing ; but the twenty I will win fairly. The rest I will pay him back ; and I will do it merely to show him that he has met his match. So remember, I tell you beforehand exactly what I intend to do.”

“Do you think he will play with you?” asked the other.

“To a certainty,” replied the Doctor, as he was called. “He has made a good sweep somewhere, and has come in, perhaps at the risk of his head, to spend his cash, and look out for another opportunity. Will you come?”

The post-master seemed to hesitate ; but curiosity got the better of a good share of prudence, and the party was made.

At the hour appointed, the Doctor walked quietly into the coffee-house ; and, passing through the long ranges of small marble tables, where people were partaking of the innocent luxuries of the South, he advanced to a spot where the stranger, who appeared so formidable to the post-master, was seated at a table, drinking a small glass of *latte di vecchio* by himself.

They shook hands when they met, like old friends ; and, after a word or two, moved into an inner room where some green tables stood round in inviting corners. A word to

one of the waiters soon furnished a table with cards and dice, while two or three of the frequenters of the coffee-house walked into the room to see the game which they divined was about to commence. Some of them formed a party at another table; but the post-master, who was one of those that entered, placed himself in the circle round the first players, merely giving a nod to the Englishman, and saying, "Good evening, Doctor."

The stake was not very high, and the Doctor lost three crowns successively; but then he began to win, and when he began he did not stop. The three crowns were won back: ten—twenty followed. He proposed to stop; but the other was growing eager, and offered at once to quadruple the sum he had just lost. Though the Doctor declined this, saying he had only brought ten crowns with him, he challenged the other to play double or quits, which was at once accepted; and the Doctor won again. The same was repeated with the same success, and

again, and again, till the stranger had lost more than five-hundred sequins.

A slight smile had been playing round the Doctor's lips, partly concealed by his moustachios ; but at last he burst into a laugh, which seemed to offend the other a good deal. His right hand fumbled ominously with his waistcoat pocket, while he asked, fiercely—"What are you laughing at, sir?"

"Why, because I have been cheating you, ever since I won the first twenty crowns," replied the Doctor. "Those were won fairly, and I shall keep them. But the rest I have no claim to." And he thrust the pile beside him across the table, adding—"I only did it as a warning to you not to play with people you do not know. You play well ; but you are no match for me."

The stranger hesitated, glad enough to get his sequins back again, though not exactly liking to be beaten and laughed at.

"Then you were really cheating?" he said.

“Not exactly cheating,” replied the Doctor, “but deceiving your eyes. I told the postmaster here what I would do beforehand ; but I never wish to wrong a good companion.”

“I wish you would teach me the trick,” suggested the other.

“No, no,” replied the Doctor. “I will show it to you ; but it is not to be taught. You must become a Master of Arts, as I am, before you can learn.”

As he spoke, he took up the dice-box, and bade his opponent put the dice in himself.

“Now call any numbers you like,” he said.

“Three-six,” exclaimed the stranger ; and the Doctor threw them.

The same feat was repeated five or six times, and a murmur of astonishment broke from all around.

“It is all a mistake of your eyes,” said the Doctor, with a laugh. “Every one go

to the other side of the table, and keep your eyes fixed upon the dice."

While they moved as he directed, he turned up the sleeve of his coat, and then that of his shirt, so as to leave his powerful arm bare nearly to the elbow. Then taking one of the dice between his thumb and forefinger in the full light, he exposed one side to the eyes of those opposite, demanding—

"What number is that?"

"Six," was the universal reply.

"Are you sure?" asked the Doctor.

"Keep your eyes fixed upon it—it is going to change."

"It is six," they all declared again ; but the moment after, a thousand different Italian expletives burst forth, with a general cry, "It is the ace !" And so it was.

Not the slightest movement of the hand had been perceived : the three last fingers were pressed in the palm of the hand ; the piece of ivory was held firmly between the

thumb and forefinger, with all eyes fixed upon it ; and yet the mark changed in an instant from the six to the ace. The stranger, who had been playing, snatched it vehemently from the Doctor's hand ; but the die was perfect : not the slightest flaw was to be detected in it, and it was evidently one of the ordinary dice of the house.

The Doctor merely laughed, and repeated the trick over and over again.

"The eye is the most deceitful of all organs," said the Doctor, addressing his opponent. "Every one would take you for a stronger man than me," (the other smiled somewhat contemptuously), "and yet it is not the case," continued the Doctor. "We can try, in a moment, without quitting our seats. Now lay your hand and arm flat upon the table. Interlace your fingers with mine, and try with your utmost power to push my hand back a hair's breadth."

The other, perhaps, began to doubt

whether he had to deal with the devil or not ; but he exerted all his tremendous strength in vain to move the hand he grasped even in the least degree. It seemed not only made of iron, but rivetted to the marble table.

“ Now, I will try,” said the Doctor. And, without the slightest apparent effort, he pushed the strong man nearly off his seat. The other uttered but one word, though in that part of Italy it might have various significations.

“ Maestro !” he exclaimed. “ Maestro !”

“ Come,” said the Doctor, “ we will talk more as we walk along ; we have had enough of this.”

And putting his hat upon his head, he rose to depart.

The way out was somewhat crowded with people, who had gathered round to see what was going on ; but, without waiting till they made way, the Doctor quietly put his foot upon the back of one of the chairs,

then stepped upon another, and another, and another, walking upon them as firmly as if they had been steps of stone, without moving them in the least. A considerable interval of space was between the two last near the door ; but he sprang lightly across, stood upon one foot for a moment, and, turning his head towards the stranger with whom he had been playing, said, in an easy tone—

“Come along ; I want to speak with you.”

“*Corpo di bacco !*” ejaculated the stranger, when they reached the street, “I have a great mind to put a stiletto into you, to see whether you are the Devil or not.”

“You dare not,” observed the Doctor, calmly ; and, as the other gave a start and a growl, like a fierce dog chastised, he added, “for fear I *should* be the Devil. Whether I am or not, I will not say ; but one thing I can tell you is, I can be of great service to you.”

The man took a rosary out of his pocket, and began to pray.

“That won’t stand you instead of it,” said the Doctor, with a malicious laugh. “Keep that for the scaffold; and, at present, make haste to save your own neck. I know you, of course, as I know everybody; and I never betray my friends; but there are more people in the town who recognize or suspect you than you imagine; and you had better get out of it as soon as possible. We shall meet between Hali and Pera, some day soon, I dare say.”

The man again started; but the Doctor added quickly—

“No more—no more. Here are people coming.”

Turning sharply away, they walked down a narrow street towards the lake.

CHAPTER XIII.

JULIAN LUDLOW rode fast, as the bearers of evil news generally do : not indeed that he was a willing messenger of bad tidings ; but, in the breast of almost every one, a sort of vague conviction exists that uncertainty is the worst of evils—a conviction which always hurries man on to *know*. It is a part of the punishment for the taste of the forbidden tree, that the natural man, as divines term it, is not contented to *trust*. He must know—even if it be wretchedness.

Thus Julian rode on fast, although he very well believed that he bore information

of misfortune. As he approached the villa, however, which took some time to reach, the road being tortuous, and twisting itself round one end of the lake, he slackened his speed to consider whether some preparation might not be necessary for the minds of Mistress Westwood and Mary. Of course, it depends upon various circumstances whether the announcement of the death of a dear friend and near relation, requires any preparation or not. With a philosopher—with a mere man of the world—with the selfish—with the vain—with the conceited—very little preparation indeed is required. All these have their sources of consolation ever ready—their little channels and conduits always cut, to let off the waters of affliction. The philosopher generally—if his philosophy do not stand him in stead—has the hardness of his heart to fall back upon. The man of the world can play at nine-pins in any of the skittle grounds of life, and thus dissipate his grief. The vain man

has always at hand a vial of balsam which never fails of its effect. With the mere selfish man, indeed, some more delicacy is necessary ; for sometimes our selfishness is struck through the breast of another. In fact, a selfish man may be considered as flayed, though he may think himself cased in iron ; for every point of his *self* is raw, and ready to be afflicted by any of the whips or stings of fate.

Into every different household, Sorrow, when she comes, enters by a different portal, and wears a different aspect. It is in the little calm, domestic circle, bound together by close links of affection, where family love is not only a sentiment, but a habit, that the monster puts on her grimmest aspect, and fastens herself with the direst tenacity. The broken ring around the fire ; the one face ever wanting ; the silent gap, where the dear voice used to speak, are continually burdening memory. But the first break is the most painful. After long years of hallowed and consecrated affection

—when it has almost become a part of religion to love one another—when all thoughts and all feelings have been intertwined, till our hearts and our minds have become one with the group around us, oh, it is very terrible, suddenly to find that one of that group is gone ! A part in the garden of life is made desolate ; and the magic number upon which joy depended, seems at an end for ever.

Such a family circle, had been that of the Westwoods. Since the death of the old Squire's daughter, there had been no break : they had lived amongst themselves—not shutting out the world from all feeling and sympathy, yet having few, very few, bonds of affection with general society. There were no near relations ; remote cousins were the only persons for whom the power attributed to blood could be supposed to work in producing attachment ; and Julian Ludlow was the sole instance in which any one had been permitted to enter, and to become, as it

were, one of themselves. He knew therefore, that the blow would fall very heavily both upon Mistress Westwood and upon Mary. It had been anticipated, it is true. It was impossible that they could have shut their eyes, for some years, to the conviction that the old Squire's death must soon occur. They must have known that it was coming—coming speedily ; but we seldom realize, with any distinctness, events that are inevitable till they are here ; and that good old man—would that I could stop to draw more than a faint sketch of a beautiful character—had so many ways of winning affection, without diminishing respect, that it would have seemed to any of his family almost a profanity to contemplate steadily the period when so bright and pure a light would be extinguished.

Julian knew all this well, and was aware that, although the minds of both Mistress Westwood and her daughter were full of sad anticipations, the blow would fall terribly when it was struck. As he

reached the house, he walked slowly through the great vestibule, and entered the large saloon, where both those he sought were seated at their morning occupations. Their eyes instantly turned towards him; and his grave, sad aspect was preparation enough.

“ I am afraid I bear very melancholy tidings,” he said, approaching Mistress Westwood. “ There were no letters for me; but this one, addressed to you, is edged with black, and has a black seal.”

Mistress Westwood took it, and gazed at it, shaking her head sadly, and Mary rose and approached her mother with an anxious face. After an instant's hesitation, Mistress Westwood opened the letter, and found all her fears confirmed. The good old Squire had gone to his rest, and her husband had only written her a few hurried lines to tell her of his own safe arrival in England, and of the sad news which had met him on the way.

“ I feel so much depressed,” he said, after the first sentence or two, “ and have

so much business to transact, that I cannot even write a long letter to you, my dear Margaret. Nor can I write to Julian as I intended. Tell him that young Knight has safely returned to Oxford, and did not prove restive by the way, as I rather expected. A few signs of wilfulness appeared at Paris ; but he was persuaded to go on at once with me, and there the matter ended. I would have invited him to this house for a day, but at Dover we met a messenger, bearing to me the sad intelligence ; and we parted soon after.

“ The death of my poor father was so sudden, and preceded by such entire loss of consciousness, that no opportunity occurred of making a new will as he intended, and his affairs rest as they were settled by an old will, made more than twenty years ago, with a short codicil of a later date. All is perfectly as it should be, however ; and Julian is not forgotten in the codicil. Lay my injunctions upon him, on no account to leave you till my return, which

will be as soon as business will permit. I have several matters to speak with him upon, of much importance."

The rest of the letter consisted of affectionate words to his wife, and messages to his daughter, which Mistress Westwood did not read aloud.

No vehement grief was shown, though a few tears were shed; but the sorrow was not the less, because its expression was without exaggeration. The day passed sadly by: the little party sometimes assembled, talking over the virtues and kindness of the dead, with eyes that occasionally overflowed, and sometimes meditating apart in their own rooms, with thoughts characteristic of the age and sex of each.

To Mary, death was a new thing. It had never before entered the circle in which she dwelt—at least not within her memory—for her maternal grandfather had died when she was only about three years old. It presented itself to her imagination, therefore, in all its gloom—a something strange,

and wonderful, and very bitter. That she should never see again the face which had beamed upon her from childhood—nor the calm, somewhat melancholy, eyes which had daily gazed upon her, with looks of tenderness and love—that the voice, sweet and harmonious, even to the last, which had so often guided, soothed, and encouraged her, should never more be heard,—was dark and awful enough : and then, where was the spirit gone, which spoke in the voice and shone in the eyes? Should it hold no farther communication with hers? and was it to be the same also with all whom she loved best on earth, till her turn came, and she departed from amongst them?

Mary was not the least a philosopher; yet, with all her gaiety and even playfulness, she had her deep thoughts too. She had been brought up in Christianity indeed, and she knew the Christian view of death. She had firm faith in the truth she had been taught ; but it is difficult, before we have known the “uses of adversity,”

to make those truths practically applicable to our hearts. They come, indeed, to console and to cheer us, at all times and in all circumstances ; but they must be often tried before we feel their full efficacy ; and Mary's contemplations ended with a darker and more gloomy view of human life than she had ever received before. So is it with each step as we advance from youth to age : our mortal existence is a study in which we are daily receiving lessons, and we are rarely perfect in the book, till we are commanded to close the page.

The succeeding day passed much in the same manner ; but Mistress Westwood, to whom the intelligence had been a great shock, spent the greater part of the time in her own room, and Mary and Julian sat out in the shade of a great Ilex, between the house and the lake, conversing over the subject prominent in the mind of each. Love was never mentioned between them—nor, indeed, had it been since the day that it was first acknowledged. Julian avoided it steadily ; and Mary was glad

that he did so. Nevertheless, they were both deceiving themselves in the belief that they were restraining all conversation upon the subject. They were conversing daily upon it, with looks and acts, if not words, of tenderness. There were fond expressions, too—expressions which they might have used perhaps before, but which now received a new significance—which were now uttered in a tenderer tone, and were employed more frequently than ever. The “dear Julian,” the “dear Mary,” were altogether different from the same sounds two years before. They came often—very often, too—oftenest, perhaps, in their most serious conversation; and, besides all that, was Julian’s steadfast gaze of admiration and love, when Mary’s eyes were turned down—detected when she suddenly raised them; and, every now and then, the look of enquiry which she turned to his face, when anything he said puzzled her for a moment, kindling up in an instant with an expression of intelligence, and comprehension, and simple confidence—

all this betrayed the fond emotion of their breasts. And then there was the occasional sigh, too—the sigh coming like a gentle breath of air, and bearing sweetness on its wings, gathered from the unseen flowers of the heart.

Oh, no ! Sterne was quite right. Talking of love is not making it ; and Mary and Julian were making love all day long, without talking about it, and without knowing it.

They were thus sitting together, and in this sweet employment, when a boat, with two persons in it, and a single rower, skimmed along the lake, very close to the shore. About five minutes after, steps were heard near, and Julian suddenly turned his head to look. The trunk of the Ilex, however, and a marble statue of Pomona, which were near, intercepted his view, till two persons, coming through the mulberry trees and other plants, were within a couple of yards of himself and Mary. They were two well dressed and powerful men, one of whom had a lofty,

free, and rather bold carriage ; and the moment they perceived the young gentleman and lady sitting there—or, at least, the moment they found they were themselves seen (for it is probable that they had perceived Julian and Mary some time before)—they both stopped suddenly, and, after a pause, the shorter and less athletic in appearance of the two, advanced and apologized in English for their intrusion, saying that they much wished to see the villa and grounds, and that, having been informed that it was occasionally shown, were looking for a servant to make enquiries.

“ I believe permission is never refused,” replied Julian ; and, although the family is at present in deep affliction for the loss of a near and very dear relation, I have no doubt that you can see the grounds, and the lower apartments of the house, if you will apply there.”

The stranger bowed and turned away, and Julian resumed his seat by Mary’s side. He fell into a deep fit of thought,

however, fixing his eyes upon the ground, and seeming entirely lost in his reverie, till Mary, looking up, enquired, with some surprise—

“What is the matter, dear Julian? Do you know that man?”

“I cannot say exactly that I know him,” responded Julian; “for I was trying at the very moment you spoke, dearest Mary, to recollect where I had seen his face. It is very familiar to me, and yet I cannot identify it with that of any one I know. I think he must be some acquaintance of my youth; but where or when I have seen him, I really cannot tell. Do you recollect him at all, Mary?”

“Not in the least,” she answered. “But he is evidently an Englishman. No Italian could ever speak English like that; and he had a peculiar Cockney twang, which is not to be mistaken. I don’t like the English travelling here: let us keep out of his way.”

“We shall be as well here,” said Julian,

“as anywhere else. Unless he should recollect having seen me somewhere, and should come to speak to me ; he, probably, will not trouble us again. If he does so, I will soon deliver you from him. He is rather an awful looking personage ; and, in my short travels, dear Mary, I have learned to keep a respectful distance between myself and Englishmen who show themselves under moustachios on the Continent. But let me go and get a book. They will be less likely to intrude upon us if I am reading to you. Do you recollect how I used to read to you, Mary, under the old oak on the high point of the hill, three or four years ago?”

“Oh dear yes,” she said. “It was the Lady of the Lake. I remember quite well I used actually to see all the scenes that Scott described. His words were like magic colors, which painted the pictures of his own imagination on the sky.”

Julian went into the house, for a moment, and returned with a book. It was

Spenser's Faery Queene. He took his place by Mary again, and read as Spenser should be read, with a full appreciation of that richness—that profusion of poetical thought—which causes the verse of the great poet almost to pall upon the taste of the vulgar and the unpoetical—upon the taste of those who either love mere verses, or seek for mere diversion, who dribble over sentimentality, or plume themselves upon philosophy. Fancy is alliable to all things but dulness; and in Spenser we find it joined in the most pre-ëminent degree to firmness of principle and rectitude of purpose. Milton called him “the sage and serious Spenser.” But such is the writing that pleases not the million. So be it, Amen!

Julian did not attempt to proceed regularly, even with one Canto; he took a piece here, and a piece there, as the poet pleased him, at the moment; and, from time to time, as he was turning over the

leaves, seeking for a new passage which he remembered with pleasure, to read it to her he loved, he raised his eyes, and looked around. More than once, they fell upon the two strangers walking through the gardens under the guidance of one of the Italian servants; and, each time he saw them, their eyes were directed to the spot where he and Mary sat, as if observing or talking about them.

Julian, not altogether pleased, commented in his own mind, as others have often had occasion to comment, upon the impertinent inquisitiveness of the ordinary class of English travellers. The true English gentleman is, I believe, the most finished, the most refined, the most elevated, of all mankind; but gentlemen are rare in all lands, and in all classes; and the vulgar Englishman, whatever sterling qualities he may possess, is the most vulgar of all things.

At the end of about half an hour, Mistress Westwood came out and joined

Julian and her daughter, putting her hand kindly upon the former's shoulder, and looking over upon the book. She seemed well pleased when she saw it.

"Ah," she ejaculated, "Spenser! I am glad of that. From the perusal of a great many of our poets one rises with a feeling that one's mind has been weakened or sullied; but baseness must be in the man who does not feel himself ennobled, and elevated, and strengthened, after reading Spenser. He seems to have distilled the very essence of chivalry, and given us the spirit pure, without any of the coarser, or the baser materials. Do you not think so, Julian?"

"I do indeed, my dear madam," replied Julian; "and that was the reason I chose the book just now. I thought nothing in the range of poetry so well suited, both to win away from grief, and to teach us to bear it as we ought. But I will leave you for a moment, to go and see something of those two good personages who are

looking at the grounds. I do not much like their appearance ; and I think they have had time enough, in all conscience, to satisfy themselves in a place where there is so little to be seen except the beauties of nature, which they can contemplate anywhere else just as well as here."

"Do not be rash, Julian," said Mistress Westwood. "Remember, you are impetuous."

"I am tamed—I am tamed," replied Julian, as he walked away. But, the moment he was seen approaching, the two strangers slipped some money into the hands of the servant, and turned off in a different path towards their boat.

CHAPTER XIV.

SUPERSTITION is the most natural and the most reasonable thing in the world. It is incredulity of any thing that is unnatural and unreasonable. The whole universe is full of marvels—of occurrences that would appear to us not only miraculous, but terrific, were it not for one little circumstance which makes us pass them by almost without notice, not alone when they are explained by philosophy, or comprehended as it were by instinct; for they are passed by, just in the same manner, by men who have no philosophy at all, and where instinct has nothing to do with the matter.

The circumstance I refer to, is custom. The less frequently a thing is seen, the more marvellous it appears; and when it gets dinned into us, either by our own observation or frequent record by others, we lose all respect for it, and treat it as a vulgar, common-place occurrence, however wonderful, or beautiful, or fearful in itself.

That savages should dance, and shout, and beat drums, and shriek—or that old ladies, whose education has been somewhat neglected, should feel a slight degree of fear, a sensation of awe, creep over them—or that Chinamen should think that the great Dragon is trying to swallow up their Emperor's first cousin, when an eclipse of the sun takes place, is perfectly consonant with the principles of our nature. It is a thing rarely seen, and therefore marvellous. Indeed, I can easily imagine that if a man were brought up—as that greatest of liars, Caspar Hauser, declared he had been—in a room where the aspect of the sky was denied him, with nothing but

the simple change from light to darkness each day, and he were suddenly set in a place where he could see the dawn, or the sun-set of a bright summer's day—I can easily conceive, I say, that the first time he saw it, he would be frightened out of his wits, and think that the world would be all on fire in five minutes.

Now, all the men who write twaddle for the great twaddle-stores of both Continents, will declare that this is very trite, and ask what it has to do with the story. But you and I, who know better, will only smile, and answer, that it is absolutely necessary to the true understanding of this chapter and another before it, to show how it is that feats which we have seen a thousand times, and which we consider only fit for the amusement of children, may, when played off upon persons who have never witnessed nor heard of them in their lives—especially if those persons be of excitable imaginations, superstitious tendencies, warm,

southern bloods, and, moreover, have a due reverence for their great master, the devil — may, I repeat, impress them with a notion of his exceedingly close proximity, and fill them with that respectful awe which is very nearly akin to fear.

The two strangers who had somewhat annoyed Julian and Mary by their presence, made their way to the boat, and were rowed in the direction of the old castle. They talked but little while on the bosom of the lake ; but the conversation became quick and animated as they mounted the staircase in the rock, and ascended to the battlements above.

“It would never do,” said the shorter of the companions, in answer to something that the other had said in a low voice ; and then he nodded his head significantly, adding, “I cannot spare you yet.”

“Spare me ! what do you mean ?” echoed the other ; “let me tell you, Signore Dottore, that in such matters I ask no man’s permission.”

"No," replied his companion, calmly. "You do not ask even mine, I dare say ; but you follow my directions, notwithstanding. I am very humble, whatever people may utter about my pride, of which I dare say you have heard tell from your mother when you were a baby. I always insinuate my commands, and never shout them forth in a loud voice, like the princes of the earth. What I meant by saying that I could not spare you, was simply this. If you attempted the villa, you would be taken and executed to a certainty. You have just seventeen men left."

"How in the Fiend's name, do you know that?" demanded the other sharply.

"It matters not," replied the Doctor. "I know a great deal more than that, if it were right to tell you ; however, you have seventeen men. To encounter these, there are seven in the villa : three are at the house of the Contadino hard by : one is in the lodge, to which there is a covered passage from the house. All these are well

armed, and have a little fortress in the villa itself. Just on the opposite side of the lane, is the house of Count Belsegno, who has five or six people with him, and all of them would be alarmed by the first firing. You would have the whole country at your heels, my good friend. So take my advice ; keep to the roads and mountain-passes, as in times of old, and let country houses alone. They are rat-traps—they are rat-traps, and I cannot let one of my pets fall into them.—You see I know all about it.”

“Why, you do not think I am such a fool as to believe that you are *really* the devil ?” asked the other, gazing at him with a heavy, frowning brow.

“No,” answered the Doctor, “you only half believe. You are in doubt about me, as all my friends are. I am never very explicit. We require faith as well as other saints, and just show enough to convince reasonable men, without requiring them to believe at all, unless they like.”

By this time they were upon the ramparts; and the taller of the two sat down upon a stone bench, where, in days of yore, many a weary soldier had probably rested. He placed beside him a pouch of knotted thongs of leather, which he had brought up with him from the boat, and, producing from its interior some meat and a flask of wine, asked the Doctor to partake.

"No, I thank you," replied his companion, "I am not hungry for that sort of thing. I will just have a little refreshment of my own kind, which perhaps you may not like to taste, though it is very comforting in this cold air."

As he spoke, he put his hand in his pocket, and drew forth a handful of tow, with which he filled his mouth completely.

"That's a curious dinner!" exclaimed his companion.

"It's not cooked yet," replied the other, speaking through the tow; "my mouth's my oven." He then struck a light; and, to the horror and consternation of his

neighbour, set fire to the tow, threw one leg over the other, folded his arms upon his breast, and, rocking himself backwards and forwards, with a calm, easy motion, continued to puff forth flames and smoke without the slightest sign of anything but enjoyment.

The other bore it for a full minute ; but then, starting up with insurmountable horror, was making his way towards the top of the stairs again, when the Doctor called him back, exclaiming, "Signor Celloni, does the smoke annoy you?—I would not for the world—Come back, come back!—I have done, I have done. Why, man, you would soon get used to it. It's all custom—you'll like it very much yourself by-and-bye."

"Not I," muttered Celloni, with a shudder, and returning slowly and unwillingly to his seat.

"Well, I can accommodate myself to all customs," answered the Doctor, in a grave and polite tone ; "so we will have a glass

of wine together.—What! have you got no glass ?” he continued, as the other pushed the flask over to him. “ Well, then, you drink first—you may not like drinking after me, and it might not be safe either. *I am not afraid of you.*”

“ I dare say not,” returned the other, drinking deeply. “ You are afraid of few, I fancy.”

“ None!” ejaculated the Doctor, taking the flask, and drinking ; “ though, to say the truth, one may suffer for too much courage now and then. I found that out some thousand years ago ; but what is called nature is very strong in us, and we can’t always be prudent. Now you yourself, in spite of all I’ve said, have got a hankering to attack the villa Aldi, and pillage it of all its contents ; just because you saw a work-box on one of the tables, filled with utensils of gold—as you thought. But I, who see through the outside of things, can tell you they were all silver gilt, and not

worth two scudi. Moreover, you would not find a hundred sequins in the house. You would not have time to kill anybody, either ; or perhaps I might let you : but you would only lose your own life, and make a sorry figure at Milan, which would not suit your purposes or mine for such a trifle. However, I have got a plan for you, which is not dangerous, and which perhaps you will get something by. It is something in which you can serve me, your friend. I am obliged to work by human means on this earth ; as you saw, I could not get my own little dinner without some of that horrid tough tow, which burns very differently from the stuff that I'm used to. Thus, I am obliged to make use of you, for a purpose I have to serve, as I cannot accomplish it by the means I should like best."

"What is it ?—What is it ?" exclaimed the other, eagerly. "I am quite ready to do what you wish."

"I know that," answered the Doctor,

significantly. “But first let us take a look over this old castle.—It is a picturesque ruin.”

“What signifies an old Castle?” cried the other. “There are a dozen such up in the mountains ; no good to any one now.”

“I never do anything without an object,” replied the Doctor, slowly nodding his head.

Without further explanation, he led the way along the battlements, and did not end his perambulations till he had explored every nook and corner of the whole building.

CHAPTER XV.

FOUR days elapsed without any event worthy of note. On the fifth, the weather suddenly changed. Autumn had hitherto maintained a sturdy contest with Winter, and had, even at times, called in the aid of Summer. Occasionally, indeed, a storm had taken place, like a battle between the two contending parties ; but the gentler-spirited season was at length—as is always the case with sweet spirits in this world—subdued and triumphed over by the rougher and the harsher. A day of genial sunshine, and of pleasant airs, was succeeded by a cold northerly blast, gathering

clouds, and drifting snow. The lake assumed the hue of indigo : the mountains, when seen, appeared, through the dim atmosphere, taller and darker, with their sunshine garniture of blue and gold laid aside in naked harshness, like the ghosts of some giant race departed ; and all things round had an aspect of gloom and melancholy which oppressed the spirits of Julian Ludlow and the party at the villa, reviving all those sad feelings which were beginning to soften away under the influence of time.

The arrival of fresh letters from England was anxiously looked for ; and Julian had made up his mind to ride over that same day to the little town, and visit the post-office ; but Mistress Westwood persuaded him not to venture out in his yet unconfirmed state of health, and sent a servant instead. The whole party, with closed windows and doors, waited in the great saloon for the return of the messenger ; and the wind blew, the snow fell, and sleet

struck the windows sharply, filling the mind with cold and heavy anticipations.

Some proverbs are based upon the wisdom of experience, some upon gross errors of darkness and ignorance ; but some seem to have an echo in the human heart ; and none that I know of, has a more sad and painful echo than that which tells us, in the hour of grief and care, that “ misfortunes never come singly.”

It was partly, perhaps, the gloomy aspect of the day, partly, the tremulous vibration of the human soul, common after a past sorrow, that made every one there present feel a sort of chilly anxiety for fresh news from England ; and one might read in the looks of all, when the servant, who had been despatched, re-appeared, that no comfortable intelligence was expected. There was a letter for Mistress Westwood. There was a letter for Julian. Poor Mary was the only one who had no communication from home ; and her eyes naturally fixed upon her mother's face.

Over that face, however, still fair and beautiful, came an expression of terror, as, before opening the letter, she gazed at the address. She had expected to see her husband's handwriting ; but it was not there. The post-mark of Waldon was upon the paper ; but the writing was that of the steward, and it gave indications enough. With trembling hands she instinctively rose up, unwilling, from terror, to break the seal, and gave a glance at Julian, who was reading eagerly. His face had become very pale, and his eye was straining with a haggard gaze upon the paper. Mary looked from one to the other, and then sprang forward to her mother's side. Mistress Westwood put her arm through her daughter's, and, leaning heavily upon her, withdrew to her own room. She dared not open the letter, even in the presence of Julian, though habit had made her regard him almost as a son. In the meanwhile, Julian continued to read : but the intelligence he received was sad indeed. The

letter was from Mr. Ludlow, and written in his plain, unaffected, though by no means incorrect, style.

“My dear Julian,” he said, “I write this to you in great haste, in the hope that it may reach you before any other intelligence arrives at poor Mistress Westwood’s house, so that you may break to her what I have to communicate, as gently as possible. I know the death of the old Squire must have grieved you all very much ; though old houses will fall, and people must be prepared for it. But what I have to tell is more serious still, though God in His mercy may yet think fit to give us relief. Your kind friend, the young Squire, who arrived here yesterday was a week in good health, though sad enough from the news that met him. I was one of the first people he saw, and he told me all about you and your late illness. The funeral had taken place before he arrived ; and he had nothing to do but to put things in order,

and return to his wife. Happy had it been if he had gone at once ; but God willed it otherwise. Yesterday afternoon, he went over to see Mr. Grimes the lawyer at Ash Locombe, and drove the bright bays in the curricule. They had not been out for more than mere exercise since his father was taken ill, and I dare say were over spirited. Nobody can tell how the accident happened, for poor Fred, the groom, was killed on the spot ; but some how the horses ran away going down the steep hill—you recollect Ash Hill, just two miles before you get to Ash Locombe—and they must have got quite mad ; for they dashed the curricule against the great elm tree that stands by the sign-post of The Two Sawyers. It is supposed that Fred was thrown against the mile stone, and his skull fractured ; for he never spoke a word more ; but the curricule was dashed all to pieces, and Mr. Westwood was taken up very badly hurt indeed.

“ You need not tell Mistress Westwood

how ill he is ; but one thing is certain : she should come over immediately with Miss Mary. You, too, must come with them, Julian—well or ill, my dear boy—not only to take care of them, which they will need, poor things ! but on your own account ; for Mr. Westwood has a good deal to tell you if he lives till you arrive. Do not lose a moment therefore, but all set out together as fast as possible.

“ I have not said much about your illness ; for I have not time before the post goes out ; but Mr. Westwood assured me you were getting well, which was a great comfort to yours affectionately

“ HENRY LUDLOW.”

Several expressions were in this letter, which at any other moment might have struck Julian as strange ; but his thoughts were too much engrossed by the illness of Mr. Westwood to dwell upon any other topic even for a moment. Julian had learned to be hopeful ; for to be hopeful or

to be desponding, though partly natural, is generally partly acquired. We learn lessons of hope or of despair; and Julian's teacher had been generally the happy one—at least hitherto. The shock indeed was great—greater than can be well described or imagined. Julian Westwood had been to him all that a kind and exceedingly indulgent father could be; and, being of a grateful and affectionate disposition, the young man had felt in his heart how greatly that parental kindness was enhanced by his own want of all claim to it.

Nevertheless, after the first sad impression had somewhat abated, he set about hoping as diligently as if some powerful Genius had given him the task of extracting honey from wormwood. The accident, he thought, might turn out less severe than it had at first appeared. His father had evidently only received an imperfect account. He entered into no particulars: he did not know all the facts. Medical skill might do much; and, being

vigorous in constitution and temperate in habits, no man offered medical skill a better chance of success.

Some of the arguments which Hope thus pressed into her service, might have been turned against herself had Julian had time for much reflection. He might have seen that Mr. Ludlow's account had been left purposely vague. He might have been led to believe that, knowing more than he said, his father had abstained in order not to crush out hope altogether. He knew that he was no alarmist, but, rather like himself, of a hopeful, sanguine disposition; and that when he viewed a case with a despairing eye, it must be a perilous one indeed.

Happily, however, before such reflections could come, and while hope was still struggling against grief, the door of the saloon opened, and Mary rejoined him with a quick step, but a face bedewed with tears. She came straight towards him in silence; and Julian took her in his arms

and pressed her to his bosom, kissing her tenderly with the instinctive knowledge that is in us all, that love is the only balm when we grieve for those we love. He tried to soothe her with his own false hopes, too ; and Mary remained so still, resting in his arms, and weeping silently, that he fancied for a time he had in some degree succeeded.

At length, however, she spoke, saying—

“ No, dear Julian, no. Do not let us deceive ourselves. Mr. Brand’s account is as bad as it can be, and he has every opportunity of judging. But we are losing precious moments. Mamma sent me to say that she wishes you would give orders for her to have everything prepared to set out immediately. She takes only her maid and my poor father’s man, Willet. All the rest must remain to take care of the villa. Some must be discharged, she says ; but she will trust entirely to you, if you will act for her.”

“ But I must go with you, Mary,” said

Julian, in some alarm. "I cannot suffer you and Mistress Westwood to travel unprotected."

"Of course, of course," replied Mary. "I forgot to tell you, she expects you would come; for the only words my poor father has spoken are, 'Send for your mistress, and Mary and Julian.'" And the poor girl burst into tears again, and wept bitterly.

"But lose no time, dear Julian," she added, after a moment. "Mamma wishes to set out in two or three hours, and to travel day and night."

"I will not lose an instant," returned Julian; "but I shall have to ride to the town, for money, horses, and passports. Stay, dear Mary! I will order a horse to be saddled; and whilst that is doing we can settle other things."

Prompt and eager, Julian called the servants together, explained to them what had occurred, and told them of Mistress Westwood's intentions. An old courier,

hired in England, undertook to see that the lady's orders were punctually obeyed after her departure ; the other servants exerted themselves in general with more zeal and activity than might perhaps have been expected ; and, furnished with a draft upon the only banker in the small town, Julian mounted his horse to arrange all those tedious preliminaries which in foreign countries have so often delayed the anxious traveller till the object of his journey was frustrated.

After his departure, two hours were spent by Mary and Mistress Westwood in making the few preparations that were necessary for their own personal convenience ; and then half-an-hour was given up to sad conversation and sadder thoughts. The carriage was all packed and ready for the horses : the two servants were prepared ; but Julian did not yet appear.

“Do you not think he is very long, mamma ?” asked Mary, timidly.

Mistress Westwood shook her head.

“ We are impatient, my dear,” she said. “ It is some miles to the town, and we cannot tell what impediments Julian may have met with there. The police-office may be closed. The officer who signs the passports may be away. Delays may have occurred at the banking-house. When we are eager, my dear child, we forget the thousand little obstacles which continually cross our path, even in the most simple proceedings.”

Another half hour passed—an hour went by ; and Mistress Westwood herself became alarmed. After much hesitation, she determined to despatch a messenger to the town to look for Julian, and ascertain what was the cause of his long absence, flattering herself, and Mary also, with the idea that the servant would meet him on the way.

But again minute after minute passed, and Mary’s anguish became terrible. At a moment like that, she felt it impossible to enter into any explanations with her

mother in regard to her feelings towards Julian, although it would have been the greatest comfort to her to tell all, and weep upon her mother's bosom. She was not restrained, indeed, by any fear of opposition to her wishes—by any dread of disapprobation. In her eyes, Julian was himself so perfect—so entirely what her father and her mother would wish for their daughter's husband—that she could not bring her mind for a moment to believe they would see any strong objection to her choice. Some vague notions, first suggested by her former governess, regarding the necessity of birth and good family in any alliance she might form, floated across her mind, rather as disagreeable impressions than as definite ideas; but it never entered into her conception for a moment that either of her parents would suffer a prejudice to interfere, where her happiness was at stake. She thought, however, that to tell her mother at that moment how she loved Julian, would only add

to Mistress Westwood's trouble and perplexity ; and she was fain, more than once, as her anxiety for her lover increased with every passing minute, to retreat to her own room, and weep there in solitude.

The messenger was absent about an hour and a half, and he returned only to increase the grief and anxiety already existing. Julian had never appeared in the town : he had not been either at the banker's, the police-officer's, or the post-house. The man had acted, however, with great promptitude and discretion. He had given information of the gentleman's disappearance to the authorities in the town ; and, on his return, at every house where Julian could have passed, he asked if he had been seen. He thus had traced him to the end of a narrow lane between stone walls, about two miles from the villa ; but there all farther information regarding him was at an end. Knowing, however, his mistress's anxiety to set out immedi-

ately, the servant, while in the town, had ordered the post-horses to be sent down at once ; had urged the banker to follow him as speedily as possible, bringing with him such a sum as would be necessary for the journey to England ; and had seen the chief of police, and the military commandant, in regard to obtaining a new passport. The consequence of these previsions was, that, in about half-an-hour after his own arrival, the villa was crowded with people from the town. The banker, a number of the Austrian police, the post-master, and the General of the district, arrived one after another ; and a scene of confused enquiry and arrangement commenced, which it is impossible and unnecessary to describe.

Austria, however, was at that time in the strictest alliance with England : Englishmen, I am sorry to say, were then more respected on the Continent than they are now : the Westwood family had rendered themselves much beloved by various acts of kindness during their short residence ;

and everything was done to calm apprehension with regard to Julian, and to facilitate Mistress Westwood's departure.

The General himself, who had been received more than once as a guest during Mr. Westwood's residence at the villa, brought with him a passport ready signed. The arrangements with the banker were soon completed, and the horses were attached to the carriage.

But, poor Mary!—how can I describe her feelings at that moment? They were too painful—too terrible—for concealment; and even Mistress Westwood, though well knowing the affection which had grown up between her and Julian, during childhood and youth, saw in her daughter's emotion much that alarmed her greatly.

All the Italians and Austrians present, came at once to the natural conclusion that Julian was her promised husband, and several of them tried to comfort her under that impression. They assured her that no means would be left untried to discover

him ; that the most active search was actually going on ; that, though brigands had certainly been in the neighbourhood some short time before, yet it was quite out of the question that they should even attempt to commit a murder so near the town in the open day. Moreover, they added, that the men of whom they spoke seldom shed blood except in case of resistance ; and that, if Julian had fallen into their hands at all, it was probable they had carried him away into the mountains for the sake of ransom, as was their common practice.

But Mary could not be comforted. Everything that was painful and terrible presented itself to her imagination ; and she felt—perhaps for the first time—how deeply, how ardently, she loved poor Julian, when called upon to leave the spot where he had disappeared, with such fearful uncertainty hanging over his fate.

All was, at length, ready, and Mistress Westwood moved towards the door. Mary

still wept and hesitated ; but her mother laid her hand gently upon her arm, and said, in a low, sad voice—

“Mary, my dear child. Remember your poor father!”

The hesitation was at an end, but the tears flowed more abundantly than ever ; and Mary followed her mother to the carriage with the saddest heart she had ever known in life.

The Austrian General, with graceful courtesy, handed Mistress Westwood and her daughter in, saying, in a whisper, to the latter—

“We will find him, depend upon it. Take comfort, I beseech you.”

The door closed, and, just as the sun was setting, the carriage rolled away towards England.

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